

The shanachie

Vol. IX, No. 1

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society

January-February 1997



Irishman struck cool notes at Yale

If Edward J. Gavegan hadn't become a justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, he might well have become a famous entertainer.

Born in Windsor, Conn., on April 5, 1863, the son of Matthew and Helen J. Barry Gavegan, young Gavegan was working in a cotton mill before he reached the age of 10. In his spare moments, however, he took up playing the cornet and when he was 17, he went to New York City where he worked as a bellboy in the Buckingham Hotel and played his cornet in pickup bands.

His talent won for him an opportunity to play with the famous Gilmore's Band. It appeared that Gavegan's prospects for a musical career were excellent, except that he had his heart set on the law.

Using the money he had saved from his performances, Gavegan entered Yale in the class of 1889. He roomed in the famed brick row on Temple Street opposite Grove Street

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Heritage Center to open at SCSU

A longtime dream will come true this spring when the Ethnic Heritage Center of New Haven moves into its expanded quarters on the campus of Southern Connecticut State University.

Announcing the details of a five-year extension of the center's lease at the university, Southern President Michael Adanti indicated he has allocated Room 117 in the Wintergreen Building next to the Moore Fieldhouse and Jess Dow Field for the center's headquarters. It is expected the new facilities will be open in the spring.

Adanti cited the opportunity to advance the mutual goals of both the university and the Ethnic Heritage Center of "promoting multicultural education through an understanding of the contributions of all ethnic groups to the development of American society ... through the sharing of resources ... and the study of ethnic heritage."

The archives, libraries and collections of the five organizations that comprise the Ethnic Heritage Center — the Afro-American Historical Society, the Italian-American Historical Society, the Jewish Historical Society, the Ukrainian Historical Society and our

Irish society — will share the Wintergreen facilities.

Heritage Center Director Jeanne Roche Whalen will have her office in the facility and there will be ample room for educational programs and exhibits and for research. The center will be staffed by volunteers. Members of the Irish Historical Society who wish to serve as volunteers should contact President Pat Heslin. Training will be provided.

The CIAHS is seeking donations of historical and cultural books, articles, photographs, documents, family histories and memorabilia for our archives. In addition to personal artifacts, school, church and organizational pictures, yearbooks, programs, anniversary albums, newspaper clippings and any other items that shed light on the Irish in Connecticut are being sought for the archives.

Donated items may be dedicated to a loved one or to the donor and all donations will be acknowledged.

The impetus for the founding of our society was the organization of the Ethnic Heritage Center in 1988 to serve as an umbrella for and to promote cooperation among ethnic historical groups in New Haven.

Legislature mulls bill on Famine studies

Four state legislators have submitted to the General Assembly a bill that would encourage local and regional school boards to include "the historical events surrounding the Great Famine in Ireland" as part of the program of instruction ...

The proposal, Committee Bill 81, was submitted by Sen. Thomas

Gaffey of Meriden, Sen. Brian McDermott of Wallingford, Rep. James McCavanagh of Manchester and Rep. Brian Flaherty of Waterbury.

Historian W.R. Aykroyd wrote, "When all is said, the Irish Famine

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Family History

CATHOLIC PARISH RECORDS IN IRELAND — The vast majority of Roman Catholic parish records in Ireland still exist. Those burned in the 1922 explosion in Dublin's Public Records Office were primarily Church of Ireland records. However, most Catholic baptisms and marriages did not begin to be recorded in Ireland until early in the 19th century. There are published lists of available Catholic records and almost all have been microfilmed by the National Library of Ireland, but access is restricted by the dioceses of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, Cloyne, Down and Connor, Galway, Kerry, Limerick. In these dioceses, written permission from the parish priest is required to view microfilms. In Cashel and Emly no access is permitted except through Heritage Centers.

MORMON LIBRARIES — Some parish records have also been microfilmed by the Mormons. The listing of those microfilmed can be found in the catalog at Mormon Family History Centers, under "Ireland-County-Civil Parish." Many of the filmed pages can be difficult to read.

BOUNDARY CHANGES — When the Catholic Church re-established the full parish structure early in the 19th century, older "civil parish" boundaries were often disregarded in favor of new ones. As the century wore on and population increased or decreased locally, new parishes were formed or boundaries adjusted. While there is no fully authoritative guide to parish boundaries for the 19th century, some books have gathered information from several sources, primarily from introductory pages filmed with the Householders' Index to the Griffith's and Tithe Applotment surveys and from Samuel Lewis' 1837 "A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland." As a result, the researcher must consider searching parishes adjacent to the one assumed to be correct, because of the boundary questions. Another reason to search adjacent parishes is that prior to the establishment of a given parish, the residents may have been served by the nearest existing parish. Several recent books list and describe Catholic parish records:

"A Guide to Irish Parish Registers," by Brian Mitchell (Baltimore, 1988) lists each civil parish alphabetically under its county and, in an adjacent column, the name of the Catholic parish or parishes which served it. Each of the civil parishes is identified by two numbers, one keyed to the "New Genalogical Atlas of Ireland," also by Mitchell, which includes outline maps of all civil parishes; the other, a reference number used on the maps accompanying the filmed Householders' Index. These numbers may be of value to those who need to determine the location of the civil parish to find the Catholic one.

"Irish Records: Sources for Family and Local History," by Dr. John Ryan (Salt Lake City: 1988) includes a listing of parish records similar to that of Mitchell. Along with the name of each Catholic parish is given its address and the name of the resident priest, its diocese (the ancient dioceses used by the Church of Ireland), the month and year of the earliest birth or marriage record and the dates of gaps in the records. The number given for each parish is keyed to a grid map.

"Tracing Your Irish Ancestors," by John Grenham (Baltimore: 1992) is a series of small sketch maps of each county, within which are drawn the Catholic parish boundaries, accompanied by lists of their names. The names are alphabetized under each Roman Catholic diocese with a numerical key to the map. The year of the earliest records is given, but there is no reference to the civil parishes in the listing of Catholic parishes.

— Paul R. Keroack

Famine legislation

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remains one of the most painful and distressing episodes in European history."

It is painful and distressing because, while the loss of the potato crop in Ireland in the late 1840s was a natural disaster, the fact that more than a million Irish people died and another million fled their homeland was the result of a blatant failure of government over the course of several centuries to ensure the well being of the weakest of those entrusted to its care.

It is important for Connecticut students to be aware of this terrible human tragedy just as it is important for them to learn about other instances of the failure of government to treat people humanely, be those instances slavery, the virtual destruction of Native American tribes during the course of American history, the inhumanity of the Turkish government to Armenians, the Nazi slaughter of Gypsies, Jews and Slavs, the similar slaughter of Cambodians by their government or recent famines in Africa where government inaction has led to widespread starvation and disease.

We urge members to write their state representatives and senators encouraging them to support this legislation.

Memorial contributions

Our society is instituting a program which will enable members to honor living persons; to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and graduations; and to remember deceased loved ones. Monetary contributions can be dedicated to the person in whose name the contribution is given. A notice of the contribution will be published in The Shanachie. Please consider giving a donation to honor or to remember a loved one when renewing your membership.

Memorial contributions should include the name and address of the person honored or, in the case of a deceased person, the name and address of the family. All gifts will be acknowledged.

Perspective

The full fury of the famine that had been building since the autumn of 1845 burst upon Ireland in the winter of 1846-47.

After two consecutive potato crop failures, there were no resources on which the people could draw.

Reports that had previously described hardship and scarcity now told of death by starvation and by fever and other diseases that ravaged a people too long hungry.

And as if even nature was conspiring against them, the winter was the coldest in memory. Snow three-feet deep blanketed parts of the country adding to the misery of the peasants, many of whom had pawned virtually all their clothing.

In Galway, a coroner's jury held British Prime Minister John Russell and Sir Randolph Routh, head of the relief effort in Dublin, responsible for a woman's death. Needless to say, the verdict did not stand, whatever its justification.

One ominous sign detected and commented on by shrewd observers was that the people were so disheartened that in many places they were doing nothing to prepare the fields for the coming year.

Nothing To Eat

The Britannia, Jan. 2, 1847

— The condition of the Irish peasantry appears to be growing worse. The stock of food is diminishing and one account says pigs, poultry and all things eatable are disappearing from the land ...

The wife of a clergyman writes from Belmullett, Erris, Mayo: — 'Alas! The distress is beyond any description and the most frequent sights that meet our view are funerals, numbers dying such as I have never witnessed before. In fact, all the old whose strength is insufficient to bear up against their sufferings are going, and positively the people are wasting from off the face of this part of the earth.'

The distress is rapidly spreading in Ulster: 'It is not alone in the south and west of Ireland,' says the Tyrone Constitution, 'that the horrors of starvation are experienced.'

'In our own immediate neighbourhood the pressure of want is now severely felt, and the number of unfortunate individuals who state, too truly, with hunger pictured in their careworn faces that they have neither meat nor money, is at present alarming ... we fear that in a brief period scenes of death by starvation will not alone be confined to the south.'

A letter from Randalstown, in the county of Antrim, says: — 'The fever continues to rage in some parts about here, and starvation to stare the people in the face ... They say the carpenters are up all night making coffins and the hearse is always in request ...'

Livestock Exports

The Condition and Prospects of Ireland. by Jonathan Pim — Exports by steam vessel from the ports of Dublin, Cork and Waterford in the first two months of 1847:

January: Cattle, 4,564 head; pigs, 13,812 head; eggs, 813 crates. February: Cattle, 4,207 head; pigs, 9,302 head; eggs, 1,003 crates.

Tipperary Distress

London Times, Jan. 23, 1847 — Mr. Serjeant Hawley (admitted by all parties to be a most impartial authority) in opening Quarter Sessions at Nenagh on Friday, drew the following sketch of the state of affairs of that district:

'Writers of fiction have drawn the terrors, the desolation, the sufferings attendant on the plague of former times, but those pictures of the imagination, highly coloured as they may be, do not equal those simple recitals of real suffering and misery which the chronicle of the times daily presents

'Robust men worn and gaunt with famine — weak women and helpless children sinking down from want of food — famished human beings uttering the cry of hunger until that cry is stopped by death — even the decent forms of burial obliged to be dispensed with and the unshrouded victims consigned uncoffined to the grave.

The spring sowing is at hand and if the land be not sown with such white or green crops as are suitable we will have a succession of scarcity.'

Weather Did It

London Times, Jan. 21, 1847 — Finding of Galway coroner's jury: 'We find that the deceased, Mary Commons, died from the effects of starvation and destitution, caused by a want of common necessities of life; and as Lord John Russell, the head of Her Majesty's government, has combined with Sir Randolph Routh to starve the Irish people by not, as was their duty, taking measures to prevent the present truly awful condition of the country, we find Lord John Russell and Sir Randolph Routh are guilty of the willful murder of said Mary Commons.'

The coroner refused to accept the verdict. The jury finally agreed to the wording, 'on her way to admission to Galway union workhouse died from want and the inclemency of the weather.'

Plague in Clare

Limerick Chronicle, January 1847 — The workhouse at Scariff, county Clare (within 16 miles of this city) is so overcrowded with paupers that a disease almost amounting to a plague has broken out amongst its inmates, the deaths averaging from four to 12 daily.

It is horrifying to behold a donkey cart laden with five and six bodies, piled over each other, going to be interred, and not a person attending the wretched cortege except the driver. The graves are so dug that the coffins are barely covered with earth, rendering the air infected.

FAMINE JOURNAL

Published bimonthly during the 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. ©1997 by the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, P.O. Box 120-020, East Haven, CT 06512.

No Breath Of Life

The Spectator, Jan. 16, 1847 — The accounts from Mayo given in the Freeman's Journal are very painful.

In the parish of Cong, 27 deaths occurred within a week; in a neighbouring parish, a like number in three weeks.

The Reverend Patrick Fitzgerald, Roman Catholic curate of Kilgeever, thus illustrates the intensity of the famine —

'I shall never forget the impression made on my mind a few days ago by a most heart-rending case of starvation. I have witnessed the poor mother of five in a family, sending her little children, almost lifeless from hunger, to bed, and despairing of ever seeing them alive, she took her last leave of them. In the morning her first act was to touch their lips with her hand to see if the breath of life still remained; but the poor mother's fears were not groundless, for not a breath could she feel from some of her dear little children; that night buried them in the night of eternity.'

Aid From St. John

The Nova Scotian, Halifax, Feb. 8, 1847 — We learn from our New Brunswick exchanges that on Saturday week last a large number of the poorer class of Irish natives residing in the city of St. John, remitted to their friends in Ireland by the Mail for England through the banks the aggregate sum of £700 in sums of £5 and upwards. The drafts were upon the Provincial Bank of Ireland. May this kindness be returned to the donors hearts a thousandfold.

Deaths In Leitrim

Bell's Life In London, Feb. 21, 1847 — Our correspondent Shamrock forwards us the following extract from a letter received by him from the very Rev. Thomas Maguire, vicar-general, Ballinamore, county Leitrim: — 'The people in this county are dying at the rate of six hundred per day. We had six who died of starvation in the mountain district last week, but they are dying of bowel complaints and of slow fever by hundreds. The population of Ireland will be lessened by two millions before August next, so sure as I live to write. The snow is three feet deep on the ground.'

We have a soup kitchen by which we relieve four hundred families twice a week, giving soup and oatmeal to each house, according to the number of each family ..'

Soup Kitchens

Limerick Reporter, Feb. 26, 1847 — We learn that the Government have resolved to despatch Mr. Soyer, the chef de cuisine of the Reform Club, to Ireland with ample instructions to provide his soups for the starving millions of Irish people. Pursuant to this wise and considerable resolve, artificers are at present busied day and night constructing the necessary kitchens, apparatus, &c. ... The soup has been served to several of the best judges of the noble art of gastronomy ... M. Soyer has satisfied the Government that he can serve enough and to spare of most nourishing food for the poor of these realms, and it is confidently anticipated that there will soon be no more deaths from starvation in Ireland.

Diary Of A Doctor

To the Editor of the Southern Reporter, Skibbereen, Jan. 23, 1847 — The only difficulty that I experience in renewing my diary is to find language to describe the every day increasing misery, frightful distress and dreadful scenes which are now of such common occurrence in this neighbourhood as scarcely to attract notice.

Legions of half naked, starving people parade the streets of this town from morning until night ... Starvation is stamped upon every countenance; men that were once athletic thrust out their fleshless hands to implore assistance and the cry of 'I am starving,' 'I am hungry,' is dinned into your ears by hosts of famishing women and dying children. The sufferings of the poor from cold are more poignant, if possible, than from hunger. To what extent they must suffer privations from want of clothing may be judged of from the fact that in this town with a population considerably under five thousand persons, forty thousand pawn tickets, some representing eight or ten articles, have been issued within three months.

The people are at the commencement of what are generally the two most severe months in this climate, almost literally naked ... When such is the condition of the poor who are able to leave their homes, some idea may be formed of the condition of those who, from sickness, are confined in their miserable cabins. Disease in every hovel and death in every hamlet. Corpses, in many instances, remain uninterred until they become black and bloated ...

Sligo Inquests

The Sligo Champion, Riverstown, Feb. 8, 1847 — Sir: Half a dozen starvation deaths have been reported to Mr. Grant this evening and he directed me to write to request you attend here early tomorrow morning to hold inquests. James Hay, Head Constable.

We have just seen one of the coroners, Alexander Burrows, Esq., and it is with the deepest anguish we announce that matters are much worse than they are described in the paragraph above ... he was only able to hold five inquests yesterday; he will resume his awful duties to day. There were forty dead bodies in the district of Maugharow kept waiting for the coroner.

The following are the names of the five persons upon whose bodies Mr. Burrows held inquests: — John Hagerty, Mary M'Guinness, Mary Conway, Brian Nelin and Mary Costello.

These deaths all occurred in the parish of Drumcliffe, up to the 10th inst. In the four first cases, the verdicts were — 'died of starvation.'

The facts of the last case are particularly touching. The family of Mary Costello were in a starving state for the last three weeks. The deceased had not any food for the two days previous to her death.

One of her brothers procured the price of a stone of meal, for which she was sent to town.

On the following morning she was found by the roadside with the little bag of meal, grasped tightly in her hand.

The verdict in this case was 'died from exposure to cold, and previous want of the necessaries of life.'

Hartford Irish affected by welfare reform of 1891

Welfare reformers were active a century ago as they are today.

In Hartford in 1891, they went after those who were receiving rent subsidies from the city. Some Irish people were caught in the belt-tightening.

From the distance of 100 years and without knowing all the facts, it is difficult to judge whether the Irish who lost the subsidy truly did not deserve assistance or whether they were made scapegoats of zealots who were willing to cut a municipal budget at the expense of those least able to take care of themselves.

At a town meeting in early summer that year, it was voted, on the recommendation of a special committee appointed to study the situation, "that the selectmen should not pay money on account of rent after July 1, 1891, to any family except such as have one or more children under fourteen years of age."

After the order went into effect,

a city official, Forrest Morgan made "a thorough and conscientious investigation in order to ascertain whether any real distress has resulted to those whose rent has been cut off by the order."

Morgan investigated 16 cases that were affected, five of them involving people identified as Irish. Morgan reported the people to be in real need in four of the five cases, but judged that aid could be more efficiently given in other ways than by providing rent money. The cases involving the Irish were summarized as follows by the Hartford Courant:

"Case A — An Irishman, 64 years old, in fair health, with no occupation, has had his rent paid by the town. He has received for this purpose \$5 per month. He has two grown up daughters able to help him, and town aid, if given at all, should be given at the town house. His wife is dead.

"Case B — An Irish widow, 60 years old, has in her family a blind

brother and also a boarder who pays \$4.50 per week. The widow's health is good. Her brother is able to go about some. The town paid \$5 on rent and coal. Both the widow and her brother can be comfortably cared for at the town house.

"Case D — An Irishman and his wife received \$5 per month rent. Each is 45 years old. The woman is in good health, but the man is insane and was once at Middletown. He is considered a dangerous person to be at large, but was kept at home by his wife in order to secure town aid. He should be sent back to Middletown. His wife is able to support herself.

"Case E — An Irish woman, 50 years old, has a daughter, aged 22, who is in poor health. The woman does housework and gets from \$3 to \$4 per week in this way. The town paid \$5 per month toward rent and coal. The woman has two or three shiftless sons who contribute

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Windsor-born judge used cornet to pay bills at Yale

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Cemetery but when classes ended he wasn't often seen on campus ... "Many of the students thought Gavegan was burning a great quantity of the midnight oil," commented one New Haven newspaper, "for seldom during his school days did he turn in until long after midnight. The dean of the school had a different notion of the boy's owl-like conduct, and accordingly he brought him up on the green carpet for a reprimand.

"Gavegan explained that he was obliged to remain out late because he was playing first cornet in the Hyperion Theater in New Haven and that the money he was receiving was being cautiously expended for meal tickets and books. The dean readily forgave him and offered a blessing."

In addition to playing in city orchestras, Gavegan gave cornet lessons to other students, thus earning more funds for his expenses. "His early struggle story," said the New Haven paper in admiration, "will compare favorably with that of any typical self-made American."

Gavegan won the Munson Prize for his graduation thesis at Yale and when he received his degree, he went on to the law school, graduating in 1891. He was admitted to the New York bar in 1892 and practiced in New York City for many years.

In 1897, he married Anna Walters O'Mara, and in 1910 he was elected to the New York Supreme Court.

Gavegan was very active in Irish-American affairs in New York. After World War I, he was among the prominent Americans who lobbied unsuccessfully for Ireland to get a hearing in the peace settlement of the war that supposedly was fought to make the world safe for democracy.

In a rally for Irish independence held at Madison Square Garden in December 1918, for example, Judge Gavegan delivered one of the main speeches. He called on President Woodrow Wilson to ensure at the peace conference in Versailles that the victorious European powers did not repudiate

the principle of self-determination on which the war was fought. Such a repudiation, he said, would be "a betrayal to the confidence of America who responded to their appeal without question and sprang to their rescue."

"We are confident," he said, "that with the consciousness of nationhood and independence, the people of Ireland, North and South, will put aside their differences and that as typified on that symbolic flag the white of peace will always prevail between the orange and the green."

Judge Gavegan lived to see an independent Ireland, but not a united one.

He died on Feb. 6, 1943, at the age of 79, and, after a funeral Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, was buried in Calvary Cemetery in New York City.

(Sources: *New Haven Journal-Courier*, Nov. 4, 1909; *The Irish World*, Dec. 14, 1918; *New York Times*, Feb. 7, 1943; "Yale College Class of '89," 1904; "Who Was Who in America," Vol. IV.)

Briefly noted

PARADE — We will be represented in the New Haven St. Patrick's Day parade on Sunday, March 16, with a float commemorating the Irish Famine. Member Jim Sheehan, the Claddagh Carver, is creating a banner depicting the logo he designed for us along with the slogans, "Black '47" and "Remember Skibereen." The float will be piloted by Frank and Jeanne Whalen.

LIBRARY DISPLAYS — Pat Heslin, Maureen Delahunt, Eva Madigan, Frank and Jeanne Whalen will prepare displays for libraries in celebration of Irish Heritage Month in March. Our displays will be shown at the public libraries in Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, New Haven, Northford and West Haven. A book about our heritage and culture will be donated to each library.

TEA — On Jan. 26, our society and the Irish History Roundtable hosted a tea at the home of member Elizabeth Dalton. Twenty-five "volunteers" attended this trial run for what will hopefully become an annual event on a larger scale. Thanks to Elizabeth and her husband Bob, to Virginia McClelland, president of the Roundtable, to Maureen Delahunt and Pat Heslin for planning the event and program, which included the history of tea, reading tea leaves, the Irish traditions of celebrating "women's Christmas" at Epiphany and St. Bridget's Day on Feb. 1, and readings of works by Irish poets and writers.

THANKS — To Eva Madigan for donating the video "Derry to Kerry, Michael Palin's Irish Railway Journey," in memory of her late husband, Jim.

EVENING AT QUINNIPIAC — The New Haven Gaelic Players will present "Spreading the News" by Lady Gregory at The Buckman Theater on the Quinnipiac College campus at 7:30 p.m. on March 27. We will have an exhibit and provide refreshments. Early arrival is suggested.

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society P.O. Box 120-020 East Haven, Connecticut 06512

"We have kept faith with the past; we have handed a tradition to the future."
Padraic Pearse

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Membership: \$10 individual; \$15 family. Send name, address and check made out to CIAHS at above address.

The Shanachie: In Ireland, a shanachie is a folklorist, historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.

Former slave lived to ripe old age here

Born into slavery in the South, William Winter ended his days at the ripe old age of 105 as a substantial landowner in Deep River.

Born in 1795 in South Carolina as a slave to a man named Henry Cox, Winter escaped at the age of 20 and came north by means of the underground railroad. He was hidden in the home of Deacon George Read in Deep River when Cox came looking for him.

Winter settled in Deep River and eventually acquired 20 acres of land with two homes. He died in 1900, having lived in three centuries.

(Source: *Hartford Courant*, July 2, 1904.)

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our society and the other members of the Ethnic Heritage Center, and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we print in each issue of The Shanachie one story about another ethnic group.

Hartford cut rent aid

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nothing for her support. In every way, she and her daughter could be better cared for at the almshouse.

"Case I — An Irish woman, aged 30, and in good health, has three children, nine, eight and five respectively. She has received help from the town and others. Her husband is shiftless and was recently in police court for non-support of family. There may be another woman in the case. The man is able to support his family."

Of the other 11 people whose cases were discussed, four were identified as Americans and one each as colored, French, English and German. In the remaining two cases, no mention was made of the race or ethnic background of those cut off from the rent subsidy received from the town.

(Source: *Hartford Courant*, July 17, 1891)

The shanachie

Vol. IX, No. 2

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society

March - April 1997

Middletown had its own immigrant 'poet laureate'

Middletown may be unique among Connecticut towns in having its own Irish poet.

For almost 30 years, Edward Barrett was a regular contributor of verse to newspapers in Middletown, earning for himself the title of "poet laureate of the South Farms," the section of town where he lived.

Barrett was born in Ireland in May 1825 and came to the United States in 1869. He apparently sojourned in England for some time before that, for his daughter, Catherine, was born in England in 1855.

He was employed for a number



of years in the foundry of the Stiles & Parker Press Co. located in Middletown, but his real love was in the composing of verse. From at least 1885 on, and perhaps before, his poems appeared periodically, if not frequently, in the columns of the Penny Press, the Sentinel and the Witness, Middletown's three newspapers.

The topics he chose ranged from the changing seasons to current events, but his love for Ireland was evident in his frequent selection of Irish themes for his verse.

In December 1885, for example, the Penny Press published a Barrett poem in honor of the Irish political leader Charles Stewart Parnell who was at that time visiting America. Six years later, it published his thoughts on "Parnell's Downfall."

In March 1890, it printed a St. Patrick's Day poem by Barrett and in November of that year, his ode to two visiting Irish patriots, "America's Welcome to O'Brien and Dillon," was published.

Sometimes, his offerings revolved around happenings in Middletown's Irish community. He wrote a poem, for example, on the occasion of the founding of a

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New Haven Irishman carried Civil War 'trophy' for 20 years

For more than 20 years, a New Haven veteran carried with him everywhere he went a reminder of his service in the Civil War. Then in 1884, Cornelius Crowley had the reminder, a two-ounce minie ball, removed from his thigh bone.

Crowley enlisted in the 9th Connecticut Regiment in 1861 and was at the capture of New Orleans in 1862 and the unsuccessful campaign against Vicksburg on the Mississippi River that same year. In November 1862, he was transferred to Co. A of the First Regiment of U.S. Artillery. In 1863, that unit was involved in the Union's campaign against Port Hudson, La., which, along with the

siege of Vicksburg, Miss., was designed to wrest control of the Mississippi River from the Confederates.

On July 8, 1863, in the assault on Port Hudson, the 19-year-old Crowley's regiment was in the thick of the fighting, and most of the members of his gun crew and 33 members of his company were killed. He himself was wounded when the minie ball entered his left leg just above the knee.

He was taken to hospitals at Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Governor's Island in New York where surgical probes by army doctors failed to discover the

location of the bullet. Crowley was discharged in November of 1864, and for the next 20 years the leg was a source of great pain.

In 1884, he consulted a New Haven surgeon, Dr. Thomas Russell, who theorized that the bullet had traveled upward and away from the spot of its entry near Crowley's knee. Crowley agreed to another operation and Russell found the minie ball embedded deep in the veteran's thigh. The bone was chisled away and 21 years, three months and 15 days after it entered Crowley's leg, the Confederate bullet was removed.

(Source: New Haven Evening Register, Oct. 27, 1884.)

Family History

WHERE TO FIND BOOKS— In the last issue of *The Shanachie*, I mentioned some valuable books about Irish genealogy. For those who might wish to consult those books, here is a list of Connecticut libraries which own them. Some libraries may have them only for reference, while others may have circulation copies. Public libraries are listed by town name only:

"Guide to Irish Parish Registers," by Brian Mitchell, 1988: Bridgeport, Connecticut State Library in Hartford.

"New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland," by Brian Mitchell, 1988: Bridgeport, Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford, Connecticut State Library, Stamford, Southington.

"Irish Records," by James Ryan, 1988. Bristol, Bridgeport, Connecticut Historical Society, Connecticut State Library, Danbury, Hartford College for Women, Greenwich, Hamden, Kensington, Middletown, New London, Orange, Southport, Simsbury, Southington, Wallingford, Waterbury.

"Tracing Your Irish Ancestors," by John Grenham, 1992, 1993: Branford, Bristol, Central Connecticut State University (Manchester Center), Connecticut State Library, Greenwich, Hartford, Kensington, Meriden, Middletown, Shelton, Southbury, South Windsor, Suffield, Wallingford, Waterford, Westport.

PARISH RECORDS — Once they have determined which parish in Ireland their ancestor resided in, Americans may write directly to the parish priest. However, such requests, as I understand it, are being increasingly referred to heritage centers. These government-sponsored agencies have been given permission to copy and index a variety of records, including Roman Catholic parish registers. For a fee, the staff will research for specific names or under a full research report. The centers vary in the level of service available to date. Addresses can be found in the journal *Irish Roots*, from the Irish Genealogical Society International, St. Paul, Minn., on the Internet (<http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/roots.htm>), or by contacting this writer through *The Shanachie*.

HERITAGE CENTER LIMITATIONS — There are limitations to commissioning research through the heritage centers. Even assuming they have finished assembling a given county's key records, one is dependent on the staff for the interpretation of the original handwritten documents, and spelling variations found for most surnames. Each stage of extracting and copying data allows for errors or omissions to occur. However, unless the records you are seeking happen to have been already compiled in books or journals, or filmed for the Mormon libraries, the heritage centers may be the most accessible source for what could be the most complete record available of your ancestors in Ireland.

PAMPHLET — The Irish Genealogical Society International publishes an updated pamphlet describing heritage centers in Ireland. The pamphlet, entitled "Ireland's Genealogical & Historical Research Centres," is available for \$8 from the Irish Genealogical Society International, P.O. Box 16585, St. Paul, MN 55116.

— Paul R. Keroack

Irish girl was a first

When it decided to hire its first woman employee just before World War I, Hartford's Society for Savings picked an Irish girl, Catherine Sheedy.

Sheedy, described as "a charming, rather buxom girl," became secretary to Sidney Crofut, the assistant treasurer.

The only woman among 20 employees, Sheedy created some logistical difficulties, according to the bank's history: "Where could she keep her valuables? Mr. Crofut bought her a metal locker and placed it by her desk. Then there was the problem of the washroom. She certainly could not share that with the men. So the bank's treasurer, A. Elisha Hart, offered her his own private lavatory. Another crisis was the annual May outing held in a cabin on the Farmington River ... In order to insure adequate chaperonage, the bank management also invited Miss Sheedy's sister and brother-in-law."

(Source: "Passbook to a Proud Past and a Promising Future," page 78.)

Connections

Seek information on Mary GORMAN (Gorman?), born Ireland ca 1835; arrived U.S. prior to 1855, to Penfield, N.Y., near Rochester. Married William Spall ca 1855. Need birthplace in Ireland. Joseph Michael KEARNS, born Ireland ca 1830; arrived U.S. prior to 1855, to Pomeroy, Meigs, Ohio. Married Mary Monteith, Nov. 11, 1855. Need birthplace in Ireland. Mary MONTEITH, born Ireland ca 1833, arrived U.S. prior to 1855, to Pomeroy, Meigs, Ohio. Married Joseph Michael Kearns, Nov. 11, 1855. Brother James Monteith also lived in Pomeroy per 1860 census. Need birthplace in Ireland. Reply to Carolann Kearnes Leskovec, 10829 Tibbetts Road, Kirtland, Ohio 44094-5194.

Perspective

Accounts became more gruesome. Thousands were dying of starvation and disease and corpses were being left unburied. The ports were crowded with those fleeing the country and grand schemes were proposed to remove millions of Irish people to Canada or put them under harsh military rule for years since they obviously could not govern themselves.

Led by their bishop, Dr. Manginn, the Catholic clergy of County Derry pledged themselves "to have all the deaths which occurred in the diocese since the 1st of November last accurately described in the parochial registries ... distinguishing those who may have fallen victim to starvation; that on the 1st of May next the records of said deaths be placed in the archives of the diocese, that the registries be rolled in black crape bearing this inscription — 'The Records of the Murders of the Irish Peasantry, perpetrated in A.D. 1846-7, in the 9th and 10th Victoria, under the name of economy, during the administration of a professedly Liberal Whig Government of which Lord John Russell was the Premier.'"

FAMINE JOURNAL

Published bimonthly during the 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. Copyright 1997 by the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, P.O. Box 120-020, East Haven, CT 06512.

Death By Starving In County Mayo

Brittania, March 6, 1847 — Mayo still suffers most. The local papers published on Tuesday give the following summary of the previous week:

On Tuesday last John Atkinson, Esq., coroner, held an inquest on the body of Eleanor Walsh. On Wednesday, at Ballina, on the body of Andrew Kelly. On Thursday, at Derryvicneal, on the body of Anthony Carden. Deceased was fifth child of his family who fell a victim to famine; a child, about five years old, who was the only survivor, was reduced to a mere skeleton. On Friday at Killala, on the body of Martin M'Donnell. On Saturday, at Crossmolina, on the body of Margaret Murphy. Same day at Caraclogher, on the body of Bridget M'Dermot. Same day at Coraghbeg, near Crossmolina, on the bodies of James Fleming and Edward Fleming, father and son, the former about 60 years of age and the latter 13. It was truly awful to see these wretched beings, once strong and able to work, till worn away by hunger, stretched side by side in death. The survivors of this unfortunate family, three in number, must very soon have to endure the same horrible fate, such is their emaciated appearance, unless they are speedily relieved. On Sunday, at Fortfield on the body of Anthony Gallagher. This man's family consists of eight persons, all suffering from extreme want, and no hope for them, but instant death unless speedily relieved. In all these cases verdicts of 'death by starvation' were returned ...

Thousands Perish In County Cork

Sunday's Well, Cork, March 6, 1847 — It is impossible to describe to English minds the actual condition of the miserable, dying people throughout this district ... Many thousands are already beyond the reach of effectual aid and must inevitably perish. Thousands more are hastening to death ... There are greater sufferings and more numerous deaths in this one district than I had calculated or supposed to be possible in the whole country ... But the sight, the shocking site of cold, naked, squalid, filthy, diseased, dying, dead fellow-creatures, strikes an indescribable horror ... Yesterday, within less than 30 miles of this city, I spent several hours going through the most wretched hovels I ever saw ... I found human beings huddled together — diseased, dead and dying ... These miserable dens contained an average of over seven inmates each; more than one-third of whom were ill of fever and dysentery; and all of whom were starving ...

In a miserable hut, on the side of a mountain road ... I found a poor man apparently dying on the floor in fever; his wife sitting by the hearth like a corpse, unable to rise to open the cabin door, a child about eight years old, as miserable looking as the mother; and — most horrible of all — partly concealed beneath some straw on the floor, the corpses of two younger children ...

A. King

Frightful Spectacle Of Wretchedness

From the Journal of Father John Sheehan, Workhouse Chaplain, Ennistymon, County Clare, March 22, 1847 — The two little girls, sisters, whom I have this moment attended, present the most frightful spectacle of wretchedness I have witnessed yet. Attenuated, emaciated, famine-stricken, they are as yet nothing but breathing skeletons; and the surprise is how they could have outlived so much hunger and cold and want. They were brought to the workhouse last night in a car, more dead than alive — in truth starved — Their parents died of starvation. Two sisters fell victim to the same calamity.

The survivors were kept alive by contributions sent from the Chapel on Sundays, until it was thought they were well. In the multitude of applications for relief, they were entirely lost sight of, no one dared at last to go near the doomed cabin where they lay, until by accident it was discovered that one of the three was dead ... and the two surviving girls, after six or seven days fasting, were snatched from the jaw of death only to linger out ... some short period of miserable existence ...

Vast Emigration

Cork Examiner, April 1847 — Still our are quays thronged ... It would seem as if the rural population of all Munster had assembled in our city, preparatory to their bidding an eternal farewell to the land of their fathers and affections.

Colonization Or Militarization

Letter to Prime Minister John Russell, March 31, 1847

— We have the honour to present to your Lordship the enclosed Memorial .. The main proposition which it embodies, and to which those who have signed it consider themselves pledged are — 1st The necessity of systematic colonization on a very large scale, from Ireland to Canada, and of the assistance of the State to promote it; 2d. The necessity of making religious provision for the Emigrants; 3d. The advantage of enlisting private enterprise, in the form of agency, to carry out the plan; and 4th, A willingness to accept an Income and Property tax for the purpose of defraying the cost of the emigration.

London Morning Post, March 31, 1847 — There are large tracts of country in Ireland — whole counties — which we should recommend the legislative government to seize upon for a period of 20 or 30 years .. Of these districts, military possession should be taken. The population should be subjected to a discipline analogous to the military, their labour being to a considerable extent compulsory, and their reward being in proportion to the diligence with which they should contribute voluntary labour in addition to that which was compulsory ... a crowd of people of whom indolence, cunning, dirt and despair are the prominent characteristics, will never get the good out of the land til they are compelled to it. Once establish discipline and the Irish will get on very well. Establish it and keep it for 20 or 30 years, and then perhaps, habits being formed, we may trust the Irish with liberties and franchises, and the privilege of taking care of themselves.

Need For Famine Death Data Debated

In Parliament, Tuesday, March 9, 1847

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN: In moving for a return of the number of persons who have died in each parish in Ireland, during each month since the 1st of November 1846 insofar as the same can be ascertained by information derived from inquiries of the constabulary and from officiating clergymen ... specifying the number who have died of starvation or disease consequent upon the insufficiency of food ...

(PRIME MINISTER) LORD JOHN RUSSELL: Said as far as the government were concerned, there could be no objection whatever to the returns from the constabulary. He feared, however, that the house would most probably be led into error by any such returns.

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN: Said it had been calculated that as many as 240,000 persons had been already allowed to die of starvation in Ireland, and if such were the fact, or even if the number were but 2,000, he wished it to go forth that such things were permitted in the wealthiest nation in the world. He believed it was in the power of legislature and of government to prevent a single death from starvation in Ireland; and if the present state of things were permitted to continue, he would do his utmost to endeavor to draw the attention of the civilized world to the fact that his countrymen were allowed to perish like vermin ...

Thursday, March 11, 1847

LORD GEORGE BENTINCK: ... It had been stated, and he had not heard any contradiction of the fact, that 240,000 persons had died of starvation in Ireland, and also that out of 110,000 in the workhouses, the number that had died in them was at the rate of 77,000 for the year. Now it was a matter of deep regret that this country should be left in ignorance on the subject ...

MR. LABOUCHERE (representing the government): ... He thought it was dangerous to ask for those returns, as they might mislead the house and the public ... For his part, he was not aware of any source from which such a horrible account could reach the government. But he could not hear such imputations thrown out against the government in that house, without protesting in the strongest possible manner ...

MR. DISRAELI: He would beg leave to remind him that the number of deaths in the Irish workhouses mentioned by the noble lord had been taken from a return furnished to that house ... that on the week ending on the 30th of January this year, there had been 1,493 deaths in Irish workhouses whereas in the corresponding week of last year the number of deaths in those workhouses had been only 162. The noble lord had stated that there was a report, which if not accurate, had at least excited considerable notice, to the effect that the number of deaths in Ireland from famine and its consequences amounted to 240,000. The right honourable gentleman opposite had said that there were no grounds for that report. But he (Mr. Disraeli) might say, he believed the number of deaths was even greater ...

'I Am Fainting Now With Hunger'

Letter from County Longford, March 5, 1847 — I shall here relate a case I witnessed the other day, I might relate twenty such seen within a week.

Seven men were in a field ... employed in breaking the clods of earth ... the whole seven were doing less than one man's work ... I was soon convinced that the men were, some of them, leaning on their implements of work, and others staggering among the clods, from sheer weakness and hunger ...

One of the men ... crawled through a gap in the hedge, came out upon the road on his hands and knees, and then tried to rise, got up bit by bit as a feeble old man ... He was not an old man. He was under 40 years of age, was tall and sinewy, and had all the appearances of what would have been a strong man if there had been flesh on his body. But he bowed down, his cheeks were sunken and his skin sallow-coloured, as if death were already within him ... 'It's the hunger, your honour, nothing but the hunger,' he said in a feeble voice.

'I stayed at the work till I could stay no longer. I am fainting now with hunger. I must go home to lie down. There is six children and my wife and myself. We had nothing all yesterday ... and this morning we had only a handful of yellow meal among us all ... Sure this hunger will be the death of all of us. God have mercy upon me and my poor family.' I saw the poor man at home and his poor family, and truly might he say, 'God have mercy!' They were skeletons all of them ... a mother skeleton and baby skeleton; a tall boy skeleton ... Four female children skeletons, and the tall father skeleton, not able to work to get food for them.

Alexander Somerville

Middletown poet

(Continued from Page 1)

chapter of the Ladies of Erin, an auxiliary to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, in that city in 1899.

The chapter was organized in March that year and when the unveiling of its charter took place on May 11 at the McDonough theater, a recitation of Barrett's poem, "The Ladies of Erin This Time," by Miss Slavin was one of the main features of the program.

Barrett's poems on Irish topics are filled with allusions to Irish history. He mentions the mythical Milesians from whom Ireland's Celts supposedly descended, Strongbow who led the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland and Tara, the ancient palace of Irish kings.

Barrett continued to write in the Penny Press until 1912 when four of his poems appeared. By that time, he was 87 years old and his eyesight was failing. That year he moved to Brooklyn, N.Y., to live with his son, Robert.

In what was perhaps the most autobiographical of his poems, "Those Youthful Days," he wrote in 1911 nostalgically of his youth:

"Those youthful days of
innocence

Unknown to care or woe,
Are stamp'd upon my memory
With all their joys aglow,
Until defunct and will be laid
In mother earth to rest.
May it be nigh to my birthplace
That spot I loved the best."

Barrett died in Brooklyn on April 4, 1914. He was returned to Middletown and buried in the family plot in St. John's Cemetery.

(Source: *Middletown Penny Press*, Dec. 16, 1885; Jan. 13, 1891; March 13, 1891; May 11, 1899; Nov. 11, 1890; Dec. 26, 1885; Feb. 3, 1905; Feb. 16, 1905; March 9, 1911; Nov. 7, 1911; April 4, 1914.)

St. Patrick's Day

In spite of coercion, we'll raise the
green banner,
And wave it aloft on our patron
Saint's day;

All true sons and daughters of Erin
will honor

This festival glorious, that ne'er shall
decay.

With them it is blended, till life will be
ended.

Its emblem, the shamrock, unfaded
remains;

Though traitors have shamed it, and
raiders defamed it.

Its saints and its sages, its bards and
its heroes,

Were gibbeted, tortured or banished
in chains.

So often, for ages, they fought Erin's
Neroes,

Their gore saturated the mountains
and plains.

St. Patrick's Day dawns soon on
freedom bright beaming,

See Erin so hopeful, so cheerful of
late,

Of Liberty's shadow no longer she's
dreaming.

In sight is this goddess, approaching
in state.

Past wrongs will be righted and
justice delighted.

Beneath her protection, wise laws

will be framed,
Alike for all stations and
denominations,

Devoid of distinction of creeds or of
classes,

Whether native or foreign, whichever
they claimed,

Impartially treating of all times the
masses,

Free Erin, most surely, at these will
have aimed.

Then toast to this day full of faith and
devotion,

A day ever-sacred in Erin's Green
Isle.

Her millions of exiles beyond the
broad ocean,

Will join in its raptures of pleasure
and smile

O shame on thee Britain, for long
thou hast smitten

Thy sister Isle Erin, unable to cope
With thy vast fighting forces or giant
resources

Whose empire is widespread all over
this Planet

While still it increases in people and
scope

Yet thy heart towards Erin was
harder than granite

Till Gladstone came forward with
measures of hope.

Edward Barrett
March 1891

The Irish Exile's Dream

Homesick, I dream'd of Motherland,
Composed awhile by sleep;

I thought it looked again so grand
That Erin ceased to weep.

And sitting on her ancient throne
The freest of the free,

In Tara's grandest palace known
Unrivalled in its glee.

So fresh and fair its green-clad hills.
Its valleys as of yore.

And heard the music of its rills
As forward pressed the mower

With merry song and spirits gay,
Unchained, he loves to toil.

How sweet to bask in freedom's
ray,

On one's own native soil.

My childhood's cot appeared to me,
With all its cherished ties;

'Twas there I prayed at mother's
knee,

Each morn as I did rise.
A rustic full of life and health,
Blithe, happy, without care.

Unstained by fickle fortune's wealth,
That glitters to ensnare.

I grieve to see its smiling scene
By strangers rude defil'd.

Which caused me in my stripling
teens

To be from there exiled.

But in my vision they seemed glad
Arrayed in green again

Without one heart complaining, sad
or bound in thralldom's chain.

When from my slumber I awoke,
and found 'twas but a dream

I cursed dark fate's degraded yoke.
My anguish was extreme

But freedom's banner waves ere
long

Despite grim tyrants' might
In all known lands, uprooting wrong

For liberty and right.

Edward Barrett
February 1905

Briefly noted

SPRING FESTIVAL— The Connecticut Historical Society's International Spring Festival will be on Sunday, April 13, from 1 to 4 p.m. Our society, as always, will be represented by an exhibit and a table of Irish scones, bread and cookies for sale. Pat Heslin, Maureen Delahunt and Eva Madigan will represent us. Frank and Jeanne Whalen will set up the Ethnic Heritage Center exhibit, "The Actual Enumeration: An Ethnic History of New Haven 1790-1990," and have a table with ethnic items for sale.

GLIMPSE OF THE PAST — Thanks to Hugh Faughnan and his family for participating in our oral history project. Faughnan, born in Ireland in 1897, is a retired New Haven policeman.

THANKS — To Dorothy Byrne Lashinsky for donating copies of her father's military records and photos to our archives. Cornelius J. Byrne served in the Fighting 69th New York Infantry National Guard and was drafted with his unit in 1917 into the U.S. Army where the unit was designated the 165th Infantry. Please consider adding your family's history — military, genealogy, oral history, political, social organization, school, etc. — to our archives.

OLD MAGAZINES AND BOOKS — Don't throw them out. An artist is seeking photos, magazines and books about Irish history and the Irish. Call M. Quinn, 203-397-0101, or send the material to 23 Overlook Road, Woodbridge, CT 06525. Also, our library accepts donations of books, particularly those needing archival protection and preservation.

IF YOU LIVE in Hamden, West Haven, East Haven, Milford, Guilford or Stony Creek, check your library for "Of Irish Ways" by Mary Delaney. Her book was donated to these libraries by CIAHS in conjunction with March is Irish Heritage Month. It's a charming book of Irish history and folk customs that is fun to read.

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society P.O. Box 120-020 East Haven, Connecticut 06512

"We have kept faith with the past; we have handed a tradition to the future."
Padraic Pearse

President: Patricia Heslin, 143 Haverford St., Hamden 06517. 248-6050.

Vice Pres.: Jeanne Roche Whalen, 58 Florence Ave., New Haven 06512. 468-0426.

Secretary: Maureen Delahunt, 15 Brubaker Rd., Cheshire 06410. 272-7144.

Treasurer: Tom Slater, 55 Robertson Dr., Hamden 06518. 248-4826.

Shanachie Editor: Neil Hogan, 26 Crestview Terr., Wallingford 06492. 269-9154.

Membership: \$10 individual; \$15 family. Send name, address and check made out to CIAHS at above address.

The Shanachie: in Ireland, a shanachie is a folklorist, historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.

Immigrant cultivated Chinese vegetables

The city of Bristol in 1904 was able to boast what was probably the only Chinese garden in Connecticut.

It was the product of a Chinese immigrant named Willie Lee Sing who came to America in 1876. Sing began operating a laundry on North Main Street in Bristol in 1891.

In 1897, Sing purchased one of a number of building lots on Jacobs Street, but instead of putting up a residence on the third-of-an-acre lot, he turned it into a garden.

In his garden, Sing grew, according to one newspaper account, "Chinese squashes, and they bear some resemblance to our summer squashes. Early in May, he plants seeds in a small flower pot. When the sprouts appear, he transplants them to the beds arranged for them in the garden. He usually has several thousands of these and beside each one he sticks a pole in the ground, much as the American farmer prepares for raising lima beans. The vegetable follows the pole until it is a good-sized plant and bears fruit."

The squashes, which were the shape of a cucumber, but much larger and longer, were harvested about the middle of August. Sing discovered a ready market for them in the cities of Waterbury, Hartford and New Haven.

Around the edge of the garden Sing grew a Chinese green which was a favorite with his countrymen living in Connecticut cities. And because the Chinese vegetables grew late in the season, he also grew about 12,000 lettuce plants each year.

(Source: *Hartford Courant*, May 26, 1904)

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our historical society and the other members of the Ethnic Heritage Center, and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we print in each issue of The Shanachie one story about another ethnic group.

The shanachie

Vol. IX, No. 3

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society

May - June 1997

Trip home to Ireland got Hartford cop in trouble

All his friends and neighbors thought police officer John O'Sullivan was the luckiest man in the world when he won the first prize at the Hibernian Fair in Hartford in the winter of 1903-04.

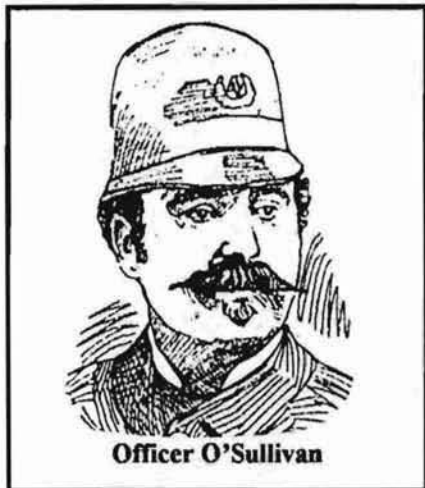
The prize was a trip back to Ireland by ocean liner and what immigrant wouldn't love the chance to return to the land of his or her birth?

O'Sullivan, who lived at 123 Babcock St. and was known as "the chief of police of Parkville" due to his long years on the beat there, made his voyage home in the summer of 1904. After a two-month stay, he returned at the end of August on the liner Teutonic.

No sooner had he returned, however, than O'Sullivan got himself in hot water with the entire Hartford Irish community when, in an interview with a reporter, he disparaged just about everything in Ireland.

Emphasizing that he was glad to be back in the United States, the policeman went on to comment, "They can talk to me all they want about Ireland's improving, but I didn't see it. Ireland's what I call a depopulated country. Everybody that's got any energy leaves the country when young to come here or to go to Australia or Africa. The interior of the country is deserted. The farmers can't get any help so all the land they can till is what they are able to take care of themselves with the help of the women and children."

In itself, that assessment might not have caused O'Sullivan a problem, but then he launched into a lengthy diatribe about the work habits of the Irish who remained at



Officer O'Sullivan

home. "They haven't got any hustle over there," he complained. "They want to go and join in sports, running and leaping and so on, all the time, instead of working."

"I says to a farmer one day, 'Why you're not going off today, are you? This is a fine day to get your hay in that's laying on the ground.'"

"Well," says he, 'we want to go and see the sports today.' No American farmer would do like that."

"Then, too, the Americans have a day's work done before they get started over there. Until I got used to it, I was half dead from hunger every day waiting for breakfast till 8 or 9 o'clock."

In Dublin, I went into all the museums and such places and they were all crowded. The parks were all full of people lying around asleep under the trees. I says to Rooney of the Freeman's Journal, one of the leading papers in Ireland, 'How in thunder do these people live?'

"Well, you know Mr. O'Sullivan," says he, 'Dublin is a center for Ireland and lots of people come here to study.'

"Are these people in the parks studying? How do they live?" says I.

"Well," says he, 'They're some pensioners, you know, but most of them stay out there all day and tonight they go to the poorhouse and get some porridge and the same thing tomorrow night.'

Vagrancy wasn't the only problem that bothered O'Sullivan. "They try to rob all the Yankees,"

(Please turn to Page 2)

Festival time!

The Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society will be represented again this year at the summer festivals sponsored by various Irish clubs around the state. We will have an information booth and display at the Fairfield County Irish Festival on June 13 and 14, at the Connecticut Irish Festival at the North Haven Fairgrounds on June 21-22, at the Irish-American Home Society Festival at Glastonbury on July 25-26, and at the Danbury Irish Festival on Sept. 19-21. Volunteers are needed to man the booths. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Jeanne Roche Whalen, 468-0426.

Hartford cop's comments about Ireland got him in hot water

(Continued from Page 1)

he said. "You have to be paying somebody all the time. Everything you get at a hotel is extra service. It's passing the hat all the time."

"We went up to the top of Howth's Head, but there's no pavilion there. By paying a little, you could get into a cottage and have some tea. Over here was a fellow with a fiddle and he passed the hat. Another man had bagpipes and a hat and another fellow was running a phonograph and a hat."

The transportation system also bothered O'Sullivan. "The trains run just as they want to and don't try to follow the schedules. They don't try to make connections between different roads either and they all come into different stations ... Another thing about the railroads is the baggage. You can't check a trunk. You just lend it to the baggage man. At every station, you have to watch to see that they don't throw it off. When you get to where you're going they don't put it off for you. You have to go and get it. Then they lift it off and charge you tuppence..."

"Most of the people are shiftless," said O'Sullivan. "We hired jaunting cars lots of times, but we couldn't get the driver to go at any speed at all unless we stopped at every public house ... It's bad in Ireland, but it's just as bad or worse in England ... The people are just as shiftless and lazy. The women go out in the field and work like the men and then go home and drink worse than the men. I says to a fellow, 'Why don't you people hustle around, get up early and do some work, like we do?'"

"Why I think you Americans hustle too much."

"Well," says I. "I'd rather hustle and get a decent living than sit idle and get no living."

"Well, we're satisfied," says he."

It didn't take long for some of Hartford's Irish people to respond to O'Sullivan. His comments appeared in the *Courant* on Monday, Aug. 29, and the next day, William J. Balfe, president of the city's Gaelic Society, replied.

Balfe pronounced O'Sullivan's remarks "amusing," but the tenor of his own comments indicated he found them anything but that. "I lived quite a few years on an Irish farm and never saw hay that should be taken in left on the ground while the farmer and his help all went to 'the sports.' I often saw the farmers compelled to work on Sundays (after church) as well as on week days to save the hay, owing to the uncertain weather. On the contrary, an Irish farmer, at first glance at least, would be surprised beyond measure to see the amount of waste and neglect on farms here in New England, the profusion of rocks and weeds in tilled fields and valuable farm implements left out on the farm any old place for months. The Irish farmer cultivates every yard of his ground and keeps it clean. There doubtless are exceptions which prove the rule."

"The shiftlessness, laziness, etc. alleged by this staunch American citizen is made difficult of belief by his own words, to say nothing of the conflicting testimony of others. He says farmers find it difficult to get sufficient help because of emigration, which is true in the main, with the result that there are better wages and better conditions than ever before for farm hands. If the people are so very lazy, 'will not work,' 'are satisfied,' what is it that makes them leave these comparatively good conditions within their possession to try their fortunes in America? That savors rather of ambition than lazy contentment."

Balfe argued that far from being preyed upon, Americans were the most popular foreigners in Ireland because they were "found to be broadminded and democratic." He added, with a not very subtle jab at O'Sullivan, "Unfortunately, however, some go over from here — many of them our own countrymen — who are not in that class, and who by their swagger, braggadocio, slang and vulgarism make themselves very unpopular and are doubtless 'fleeced' into the bargain. Very

often they are people who had no opportunity of acquiring an Irish education before they left, and instead of repairing that misfortune here, acquire the American slang and vulgarisms of the 'bully gee' boys. As they misrepresent Ireland here, so they misrepresent America in Ireland."

"In the light of Officer O'Sullivan's interview we can readily understand his aversion to those whom he was told were students in Dublin, and to the numbers he saw in the museums, for these are historical and educational institutions. Why a quite wonderful number of Americans here in Hartford actually waste their time in the public library!"

Another correspondent, Mary Donlon, began her reply, "Kindly allow me space in your columns to correct some of the errors of an Irishman (in name only) recently returned from his native land."

Among other things, Donlon disputed O'Sullivan's comment that the Irish people were not diligent workers. "I've been in Ireland quite recently and in a small, but thriving, town on the banks of the Shannon, 1,000 men and women were wending their way to the mills at 6 a.m. to work. True they don't breakfast till 9, but that's quite stylish, you know."

Donlon made fun of O'Sullivan's charge that he could not get the driver of a jaunting car to go fast. "Ah," she said, "it was not the poor driver; 'twas the load of intelligence such as Irish horses are not accustomed to that caused the poor animal to go slow."

Another correspondent, T.J. Morkam, took O'Sullivan to task for being "a very poor judge of the condition of things at home or abroad. I lived in the city of Dublin 20 years," he said, "and I never knew of a Yankee or anybody robbed. Mr. O'Sullivan says he was paying something all the time for extra service. I know that in the city of Dublin, you have to pay for what you get as everywhere in any hotel, and passing the hat is out of the question."

(Source: *Hartford Courant*, Aug. 29-31, 1904.)

Perspective

Ireland was too small to contain such an awful tragedy as the Famine. Hundreds of thousands of Irish people saved themselves from starvation by fleeing the country.

Newspapers described the long columns of country people wending their way toward seaports and the crowded quays in those ports as the emigrants waited for ships to take them to Liverpool or Boston, Quebec or Australia.

Most of those who fled were already weakened from two years of hunger. Thousands of them died on the voyages in the infamous "coffin" ships. Others lost their lives in shipwrecks. Those who survived the voyage were left to make their way with little or no money to sustain them once they reached their destination.

An editor who returned to Liverpool from the United States wrote: "The scene in New York is truly lamentable. The Irish are there walking and begging in the streets in as numerous groups as you will find them in Liverpool."

And at home the death toll mounted both from starvation and from disease.

FAMINE JOURNAL

Published bimonthly during the 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. Copyright 1997, the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, P.O. Box 120-020, East Haven CT 06512.

The Famine Spills Over To America

170 Irish Die In Shipwreck

Limerick Reporter — By arrivals from Quebec, we hear that a most distressing shipwreck has occurred in the river St. Lawrence to an English government chartered emigrant ship, with a loss of 170 of its ill-fated passengers. The vessel is called the Carrick, a brig between 200 and 300 tons burthen, Captain Thompson, master, belonging to Sutherland. She was chartered, we understand, for Irish emigration early in April last, and left Sligo for Quebec in the later part of that month with a living freight of nearly 200 emigrants. The voyage up to the time of the ship's arrival in the river St. Lawrence appeared to have been desirable as could be wished at that period of the season, excepting the sad condition of the emigrants, most of them suffering greatly from fever. On the night of the 19th of May, she encountered a heavy gale of wind, which at about two on the following morning drove her ashore on a dangerous shoal, situated about 60 miles eastward of Cape Rossiers, when in the course of two hours she went to pieces. The scene is described to have been one truly appalling. Out of 200 poor creatures not more than 22 were saved — the remainder perished.

Mutiny On An Emigrant Ship At Boston

Boston Liberator — The British brig Mary, Capt. Wyman, from Cork, arrived at this port on the 17th of May, with 45 steerage passengers. The city authorities would not suffer them to be landed, owing to their destitute condition, unless the master gave bonds that they should not become a burthen to the city. This he was unable or unwilling to do, and came to the conclusion that he must take them to Halifax for which port he accordingly cleared on Saturday. The passengers were naturally much exasperated at the turn matters were taking, and when the pilot ordered the crew to weigh anchor, the passengers took possession of the handspikes and windlass, and assaulted Captain Wyman, who called to his assistance Captain Josias Sturgis of the revenue cutter Hamilton, whence a boat's crew, armed with cutlasses came on board. Capt. Sturgis ordered the women and children to go aft, and the men to fall back from the windlass, which they did. He then got the brig under weigh and accompanied her some distance, leaving her with a fair and fresh breeze. The resistance of the unfortunate passengers is not to be wondered at, when it is considered that they were not landed at the termination of the voyage, but forced to go in an entirely different direction from what they contemplated.

Bishop Of Quebec Warns Of Emigration Hazards

Letter to the Catholic Archbishops And Bishops Of Ireland — The voice of religion and humanity impose on me the sacred and imperative duty of exposing to your Lordships the dismal fate that awaits thousands of the unfortunate children of Ireland who come to seek in Canada an asylum from the countless evils afflicting them in their native land ... Already a considerable number of vessels overloaded with emigrants from Ireland have arrived in the waters of the Saint Lawrence. During the passage, many of them weakened beforehand by misery and starvation, have contracted fatal diseases, and for the greater part have thus become the victims of an untimely death ... Anchoring at Grosse Ile, about thirty miles below Quebec, where they are compelled to perform a quarantine, the transatlantic vessels were most commonly infected with sick and dying emigrants ... Already more than a thousand human beings have been consigned to their eternal rest in the Catholic Cemetery, precursors of thousands of others who will rejoin them there if the stream of emigration continues to flow ... I submit these facts to your consideration that your Lordships may use every endeavour to dissuade your diocesans from emigrating in such numbers to Canada, where they will but too often meet with either a premature death or a fate as deplorable as the heartrending condition under which they groan in their unhappy country ...

Jos. Signay, Archbishop of Quebec, 9th June 1847

Fever At Work

London Times, May 5, 1847 — Deaths by famine are happily becoming rare, but fever is rapidly doing the work of decimation. The accounts from Kerry, Galway, Roscommon and Longford are of an extremely unfavourable character. In the union workhouse of the latter county, the number of deaths in the year ending the 1st of April 1846 was 112, while for the corresponding period this year they amounted to 677.

London Times, May 6, 1847 — Sir, As I have been for the last three weeks engaged in making an inspection of a portion of the south-west of county Cork, perhaps the testimony of an eye-witness on the subject of the distress may be interesting ... The number of cases of fever in (Bantry) I have estimated at 180; and of dysentery at 270, giving a total of 450 cases of disease out of a population of about 3,200 inhabitants, nearly one-seventh of the entire.

The condition of the fever patients is indeed deplorable, living in close, ill-ventilated huts, surrounded by a dense atmosphere of smoke and seldom separated from the other members of the family, as there is no hospital accommodation outside the workhouse ... In several cases, I have seen the poor sufferers obliged to sit crouching over the fire, from the want of sufficient clothes to cover them or even straw to lie upon ... In the greater number of cases, they are for one half of the week without drink or nourishment of any sort except cold water ...

The mortality of Bantry is yet very high, (the last day of April I saw three pits, in one of which were buried 232, in the second 215, and the third, 75, all from the workhouse ... The weekly mortality rate in the town alone is yet upwards of 100 or 1 in 32 which is 70 times higher than in London ...

Joseph Kidd

Sickening Scenes

London Times, May 10, 1847 — Destitution in the hitherto flourishing county of Fermanagh is rapidly increasing. At the last meeting of Enniskillen Board of Poor Law Guardians a proposition to bury the paupers without coffins was gravely discussed, but eventually the resolution was abandoned.

One of the local papers thus describes a scene while the guardians were engaged in their deliberations: The miserable creatures finding the door opened rushed in ... The imploring and agonizing looks of the unfortunate creatures but too truly indicated the increase of disease and hardship in this portion of the country; the children appeared to be dying in the act of endeavouring to extract sustenance from the dried-up breasts of their parents; others, more mature in years were propped up by some relative or acquaintance who was fast hastening to a similar state of weakness. The general appearance was truly sickening ...

Encyclical Issued

Venerable Brethren — ... We recommend that in the dioceses or districts subject to your jurisdiction, you should appoint three days for Public Prayer, in churches or other holy places whereby the Father of Mercies would be sought to avert this dreadful calamity from Ireland as well as from the rest of Europe. And that this may be the more cheerfully and the more advantageously effected, we hereby grant an indulgence of seven years to all those who will have been present at these prayers even once; but to those who shall have attended on each of the three days and that within that week devoutly receiving the Holy Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist we impart, in virtue of our apostolic authority, a Plenary Indulgence ...

Pope Pius IX

6 In Family Die

Tipperary Vindicator, May 1847 — In a house in the Old Turnpike, Nenagh, on Wednesday, a family consisting of six persons, occupied one wretched bed. Two children lay dead at the foot of the miserable pallet of straw. Three others were in typhus fever, the disease of which the others had died, and the father who had been, we understand, an expert journeyman tailor a few months ago, but who had no employment, was unable to crawl about the dark cabin, quickly sinking as he was under starvation. Not a soul was to be found to enter that awful abode of sickness and death ... Scenes like these are frequent, sufferings as intense are daily met with by the clergy in their avocations in several districts ...

Food Exported

Limerick Reporter, June 15, 1847 — It would appear from the continued importations of food into Liverpool from Ireland that the speculators in this country have been somewhat disappointed. Prices of food are still enormously high, yet the speculators do not appear to be satisfied or cannot realise profits equal to their extravagant expectations ...

According to the doctrines of political economy, these speculators may not be interfered with, but are at full liberty to drive the most lucrative trade they can in the food for the want of which the people are starving ...

Here is a list of Irish exports to Liverpool alone from the 20th of May to the 3d instant ... 168 tons of wheat, 302 quarters same, 485 barrels same, 380 sacks same, 570 loads of oatmeal, 100 barrels same, 481 sacks same, 20 barrels same, 350 quarters oats, 637 barrels same, 4 tons same, 31 sacks same, 67 quarters beans, 70 sacks same, 718 quarters malt, 33 sacks barley meal, 92 barrels Indian meal.

Most Horrifying

Cork Examiner, May 2, 1847 — We today witnessed a most horrifying and appalling spectacle at the Shandon guard-house, at the foot of Mallow lane. Under the sheds attached to that building lay some 38 human beings — old and young men, women, children and infants of the tenderest age — all huddled together like so many pigs or dogs, on the ground without any other covering but the rags on their persons and these in the last stage of filth and hideousness.

There they lay — some dying, some dead — all gaunt and yellow and hideous with famine and disease. We have seen many sights of horror within the last month, but never anything equal to this congregated mass of human debasement.

The smell that came from the unfortunate was offensive in the extreme and was sufficient of itself to propagate disease.

Two of these wretched people died this morning — a man and a child. How many will follow them before the evening to their home of eternal peace we may not calculate. Several dead bodies — principally of children — were found this morning in various parts of the city. Hundreds of wretched objects lie about under sheds without food or clothing.

Nettles Devoured

A Waterford paper states that no nettles or water-cresses can now be found in the neighbourhood of Dungarvan, as the starving peasants have devoured all those plants.

Kerry Reduced

It has been calculated that the constituency of the county Kerry has been reduced by half through death, emigration and lapsed qualification.

Family History

NEWSPAPER OBITUARIES — The obituary columns of newspapers can be valuable sources of genealogical information. Modern-day papers, of course, provide a wealth of information about a person's parents and frequently grandparents, brothers and sisters and children as well as about his or her education, employment and leisure-time interests and associations.

Obituaries in earlier newspapers are much more chancy. Frequently, they contain only one or two lines and merely mention the name of the deceased with little or no information about parents or other relatives. Still, it is usually worth the time and effort to track down obituaries from whatever period because they occasionally provide clues to relationships or fascinating details about the deceased or the family. For example, the three-line obituary of an infant, Martha S. Carroll, the 2-year-old daughter of Thomas and Almira Carroll, was accompanied by a loving, five-verse poem when it appeared in the New London Morning News on Nov. 13, 1844.

Similarly, the obituary of Mrs. Mary Flynn of Terryville in the Hartford Courant of March 4, 1908, is filled with interesting information both about family ties and her personal life. She was born 60 years ago, it said, in the city of Waterford, Ireland, and came to America at the age of 30, "marrying James Flynn at New York. Their married life was spent here upon Town Hill where Mr. Flynn died about 20 years ago." After his death, his widow moved to Terryville Center, "her home being next to the Church of the Immaculate Conception." Mrs. Flynn, the paper related, "was a friend of the friendless and an active worker. Her name was known far and wide among the tramps whom she was never known to turn away without a square meal." The obituary goes on to list all Mrs. Flynn's survivors, including a sister in New Jersey.

OLDEST IRISHMEN? WELL, MAYBE — One sure way to get extra obituary space in the old days was to have a reputation as the oldest Irish resident of a community. It is difficult to know how much credence to place in "oldest Irish resident" obituaries because their authenticity frequently depended on the memory of other old-timers in town rather than on any comparison of vital records or census data. Still, if an ancestor was known to have lived to a ripe, old age and to have been among the earliest Irish in a community, that ancestor may have gotten some extra space in the obituary column. When John J. Lynch died at his home in Portland on July 10, 1899, at the age of 100, he was said to be "probably the oldest Irish-American resident of Middlesex County." The obituary for Lynch contained little additional information about Lynch other than the fact that he was born in Ireland, came to Connecticut at an early age and was survived by two sons and four daughters. When Patrick McNally died in New Haven in September 1876, he was described as "one of the oldest citizens in New Haven ... He came to this country in 1832 ... (and) was employed in a number of well-known families and for a few years was sexton of St. Bernard's cemetery."

WHERE TO FIND OLD NEWSPAPERS — The majority of public libraries maintain either microfilms or bound volumes of newspapers serving their communities. In addition, the state library in Hartford has an extensive collection of microfilms of old Connecticut newspapers. Librarians are always willing to help a researcher find and get set up with a microfilm. Before attempting to research such papers, it is wise to have as accurate a date of death as possible since browsing takes a long time.

AOH picnic featured shaved pig race

Sports were a major part of the festivities at the annual Ancient Order of Hibernian picnics in Hartford in the 1870s.

Baseball, horse racing, and an assortment of other competitions were on the agenda at the AOH picnic at Charter Oak Park on Wednesday, Aug. 25, 1875.

The picnic began at 10 a.m. with a "Grand Game of Base Ball" between teams selected from the first and second divisions of the Hartford AOH.

The horse racing was restricted, said an advertisement for the picnic, to animals that had never before raced and were entered by members only.

Sack and wheelbarrow races were also held and the program of sports culminated with the "Grand Chase After a Shaved Pig," with the prize of the pig going to the person who could hold it by the tail.

Music for the picnic was provided by the St. Peter's Band and admission was 50 cents. Train fare to the picnic grounds was an extra 20 cents.

(Source: Hartford Courant, Aug. 24, 1875)

Connections

Seek ancestors of Michael DOWNEY, born Limerick, Ire., died Stamford, CT, 1896, age 51. Also his wife, Margaret DALTON, born Ireland, died Greenwich, CT, 1870. Children: John T., born 1864; Lizzie, 1866-1870; Daniel, 1870-1916, died Stamford. Michael remarried in 1872 in Stamford to Mary Glynn and had other children. Also, seek ancestors of Bridget O'FARRELL, daughter of Patrick FARRELL and Bridget O'ROURKE. Married Oct. 27, 1867, in Stamford, CT, to Artimus BOATMAN; died April 10, 1932. Reply to both queries: Sister Roberta Downey, 947 Lakloey Drive, North Pole, Alaska.

Briefly noted

MEMORIALS — The following memorials have been received: donation in memory of Gertrude Hines by niece Helen Donarum, donation in memory of the Gildea and Heslin families by Patricia Heslin, donation in memory of Archie O'Donnell by Carolyn Westerfield, donation in memory of the Roche and Whalen families by Francis and Jeanne Whalen.

DONATIONS — We thank members who included donations with their membership renewals. Bill & Rosemary Barrett, Patrick W. Bohan, Rita Breese, Robert & Mary Colburn, Stephen Collins, Joseph & Susanne Bowery, James & Catherine Condon, Raymond J. Donahue Sr., Helen Donarum, John & Mildred Doody, John P. Droney, John & Helen Farrell, Paul R. Farrell, Edward Fox, Thomas Gallagher, William & Audrey Gallogly, Mary Ford Griffin, Cornelius J. Healy, Patricia Heslin, Vincent Hines, Neil Hogan, Patrick M. Hogan, David C. Howe, Judith Ellen Johnson, Paul R. Keroack, Colleen Kissane Tierney, Stephen & Kathryn Kraffmiller, Diane B. Lenti, Bob Lingane, Ellen, Martin and Michael Looney, Joan & Thomas D. Luby, William & Nathalie Nugent Manniel, Francis McRickard, Mary Ellen Mininberg, William J. O'Brien, Philip Paoella, Janet F. Pestey, Helen K. Quinn, James & Patricia Reardon & Family, Maureen Rynne, Tom & Noreen Slater, Bohdan & Ella Sowa, Mary Beth Stevens, Winston Suitor, George Waldron, John & Rosemary Waldron, Carolyn E. Westerfield, Francis & Jeanne Whalen, Mrs. Frances C. Winston.

GIFTS OF MEMBERSHIP — From John Sullivan of Niantic to Claire Donahue, Carol French, John O'Leary, Ellen Sullivan & Emmet Sullivan; from Rosemary Palmer of Guilford to John J. McDonald & Liza E. Palmer; from Francis & Jeanne Whalen of New Haven to David & Stephanie Ewart & Family, Jim & Margie Ewart & Family and Stephen & Caroline Ewart & Family; from Mary Florence Lillis of West Haven, a happy birthday to Thomas F. Lillis IV.

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society P.O. Box 120-020 East Haven, Connecticut 06512

"We have kept faith with the past; we have handed a tradition to the future."
Padraic Pearse

President: Jeanne Roche Whalen, 58 Florence Ave., New Haven 06512. 468-0426.

Vice Pres.: George Waldron, 145 Corbin Road, Hamden 06517.

Secretary: Maureen Delahunt, 15 Brubaker Rd., Cheshire 06410. 272-7144.

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Shanachie Editor: Nell Hogan, 26 Crestview Terr., Wallingford 06492. 269-9154.

Membership: \$10 individual; \$15 family. Send name, address and check made out to CIAHS at above address.

The Shanachie: In Ireland, a shanachie is a folklorist, historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.

French-Canadian overcame disability

People who have disabilities are always proving both their talents and their mettle in the world of sports.

Such was the case in the early 1900s with Amede Blanchette, a French-Canadian native of the eastern Connecticut town of Taftville.

While playing baseball near the tracks of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad at an early age, Blanchette was knocked down by a train. His right leg was severely injured and had to be amputated.

Not willing to give up the game he loved, Blanchette learned not only to get along with one wooden leg, but to continue to play baseball.

During his college days at St. Cesaire in Canada from 1890 to 1894, he won a majority of the games he pitched and when he returned to Connecticut, he became a star catcher and pitcher for what was described as "the crack amateur team, the Andems of North Grosvenordale."

In one July 4th doubleheader, Blanchette caught the morning game, had one hit, scored a run and made 12 putouts and four assists. In the afternoon, he pitched his team to a 5-3 victory over Putnam, holding opposing batters to only five hits.

Blanchette worked as a weaver in one of the North Grosvenordale mills, but despite his handicap, baseball continued to be his first love. "Baseball men who have seen Blanchette work," said the Hartford Courant, "say he is equal to most of the catchers with two legs and superior to many who are drawing big salaries in the Connecticut League."

(Source: Hartford Courant, July 12, 1904)

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our historical society and the other members of the Ethnic Heritage Center, and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we print in each issue of The Shanachie one story about another ethnic group.

The shanachie

Vol. IX, No. 4

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society

July - August 1997

'CATALPA JIM' REYNOLDS

Aug. 24 marks centennial of New Haven Fenian hero

One hundred years ago, on Sunday, Aug. 22, 1897, James Reynolds, one of Connecticut's leading Irishmen and one of the foremost Fenians in America, died at his home at 557 East St. in New Haven.

Active in many Irish and Irish-American causes, Reynolds was best known for his role in the freeing in 1876 of six convicts whose sentence for Fenian activities in Ireland had been transportation for life to a British prison in Western Australia. That escapade won for him the nickname "Catalpa Jim" in memory of the New Bedford whaling ship of that name which was used in the rescue.

Reynolds was born on Oct. 20, 1831, in County Cavan, the son of Michael and Ann Reynolds, and immigrated to the United States with four cousins in the depths of the Potato Famine in 1847.

He settled in Patterson, N.J., where he learned the trade of brass molding, and then moved to New Britain where he became a foreman in the J.B. Sargent Co.'s brass foundry.

In 1851, he married Ann Eagan of New Britain and when the Sargent company moved to New Haven a few years later, the Reynolds bought a home in the Elm City.

Reynolds later established his own brass foundry, located first on Orange and then on East Street.



James Reynolds

But if Reynolds' work was brass molding, his life's blood was the cause of Irish freedom. In 1854, he was a delegate from New Britain to the convention which assembled in New York to develop plans for a monument to Robert Emmet and he later was active in the national Emmet and Phoenix associations of Irish-Americans promoting the independence of Ireland. When the Fenian Brotherhood was organized in the United States in the 1860s under the name Clan na Gael, Reynolds became a leader in that movement among Connecticut's Irish.

The event which earned him the sobriquet "Catalpa Jim," had its roots in the sentencing in 1866 by a

court in Dublin of six Fenians — Robert Cranston, James Darragh, Michael Harrington, Thomas Hassett, Martin Hogan and James Wilson — to life imprisonment for participating in a plot to overthrow English rule in Ireland. The plotters were transported to Western Australia to serve their sentences in the prison at Freemantle.

An unsuccessful escape attempt by one of the six, Thomas Hassett, in 1870, and letters from the convicts detailing their circumstances led to the appointment at the Fenian Brotherhood's annual convention in Baltimore in 1874 of a committee to explore the possibility of an escape effort directed from the United States. Reynolds was appointed treasurer of the committee.

After consulting with other Fenians who had at one time been imprisoned at Freemantle, the committee concluded that discipline at the prison there was so lax that if a ship could reach Australia undetected, there was a good chance of spiriting the prisoners away.

A secretive fund-raising effort was undertaken by Reynolds and sufficient funds were raised to purchase a New Bedford whaler named the *Catalpa*. The committee hired a sea captain, George Anthony, of New Bedford, and set about refitting the *Catalpa* for its long voyage. At one point, funds ran low and Reynolds stepped for-

(Please turn to Page 3)

Family History

A WORD ABOUT SPELLING — There are enough serious hurdles to overcome in tracing family history without letting spelling problems that are not really problems at all get us bogged down. Here are two examples of problems that should not, but often do, stand in the way of family researchers.

MAC AND MC — It is not uncommon to hear someone say, "We're Irish because we spell our name 'Mc' and they're Scottish because they spell it 'Mac.'" You may be Irish and they may be Scottish, but it is not because of the way the name is spelled. It is a mistaken notion that "Mac" is Scottish and "Mc" is Irish. In fact, the ancient Irish names that use that prefix are almost always written "Mac" or "Mag." As the eminent Irish genealogist Edward MacLysaght (notice the "Mac") pointed out in 1969, "The practice of differentiating between 'Mac' and 'Mc' is fortunately dying out. There is no difference: 'Mc' is simply an abbreviation of 'Mac.'" So if you are a modern-day McDermott or McMahon, your ancestors were undoubtedly MacDermott and MacMahon and you needn't let that stand in the way of your research.

MAC AND O — Just for the record, "Mac" means "son." Thus "MacDonald" means "son of Donald." "O" signifies "grandson," or in a wider sense "descendant of." "O'Brien" means "grandson of Brien" or "descendant of Brien."

REMEMBER DAN QUAYLE — When you are getting confused about Irish names, it is good to recall former Vice President Dan Quayle who got into trouble when he insisted on 'potatoe' rather than 'potato.' The fact of the matter is that a century or so ago what we today spell 'potato' was commonly spelled 'potatoe,' so Quayle was not entirely wrong, but just hadn't kept up with the changes. What happened with that word happens frequently with family names. There was a time when Gaelic Irish names almost universally began with "Mac" or "O." Over the centuries, the "Mac" and "O" frequently were dropped, especially since most of those doing the recordkeeping were not Irish and had no interest in maintaining Irish customs. In some cases, there was a renewal of the Irish ways of naming and the old prefixes were restored, but in other cases not. That is why such Irish names as Kennedy, Quinn and Nolan are seldom found today with their original "O" prefix.

VARIATIONS — The second problem is that of common variations in spelling. Sometimes people will say, "I know we are not connected to that family because they spell their name 'Daley' and we spell ours 'Daly.'" Here again that is creating a problem where there really is none because spelling is a highly evolutionary art.

WHAT'S THE POINT? — The point is that when doing family research, we Irish need to keep an open mind about spellings. We need to be aware that when a surname is spelled differently it does not automatically rule out a relationship with our family. Names, like language itself, are living things that are constantly changing. Witness "Connolly," "Connelly," "Conly," "Conley," and "McEneaney," "McAneaney," "McEneany," etc. If we are a "Gilbride," we must keep in mind that our ancestors in Ireland may well have been known as "MacGilbride." If we are a Hanahan, we need to realize that genealogists have found numerous variations in the spelling of that name, that we may indeed be related to someone named Hannaghan, Hanneghan or Hanehan, and that the family records may be under any one of those names.

WEEKEND WORKSHOP — The New England Historic Genealogical Society will sponsor its third annual Irish Genealogical Conference on Sept. 12-13 at the Ramada Rolling Green Inn, Andover, Mass.

PRINCIPAL SPEAKER — The main speaker will be Kevin Whelan, visiting history professor at Notre Dame University. Whelan will address the opening session on Friday, Sept. 12, at 9 a.m. on the topic: "The Cultural Background of Your Irish Ancestor." At the banquet on Friday evening, he will discuss "A Lighthearted Look at Irish History." On Saturday, Sept. 13, he will speak about Irish genealogical resources for the 18th and 19th centuries.

TOPICS — Topics that other speakers will address include: "The Immigrant Child in 19th Century America," "Cork Immigration in Boston," "The Irish in 18th Century America," "Tracing the Origins of Scots-Irish Immigrants to America," "Finding an Ancestral Homesite Using Valuation Records," and "Researching Your Irish Maid Ancestor."

REGISTRATION — The basic conference registration without meals is \$99 for members of the New England Historic Genealogical Society and \$125 for non-members with various options for meals, the banquet and one-day attendance. Registration may be made through the Irish Conference, NEHGS Education Department, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116-3007.

BOOKS — One source for Irish books is The Irish Bookshop, 580 Broadway, R. 1103, New York, NY 10012. Tel.: 212-274-1923. Hours: Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Perspective

In July and August 1847, there were those who considered the Famine to be over. Their optimistic view was encouraged by reports of a good harvest in Ireland. Recipients of temporary relief dropped from a high of more than 3 million, a third of the population, on July 3 to 2 1/2 million on Aug. 1.

The London Times editorialized on Aug. 14 on the importance of winding down the relief effort: "The people of England are not wanting either in charity or in patience, but we are sure they would all think it high time the Commissioners for Irish Relief should close their account."

In their hurry to have the Famine just go away, however, the Times and the government ignored the utter lack of resources of the Irish people. Left prostrate by two years of utter destitution, few peasants had any seed left to plant so even with a good harvest, the crop fell far short of what was needed. The peasants were left to face another winter with neither food nor work. The toll from starvation and attendant diseases would continue. And those who had emigrated were dying in seaports up and down the coast of North America.

FAMINE JOURNAL

Published bimonthly during the 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. Copyright 1997, the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, P.O. Box 120-020, East Haven CT 06512.

Destitution In Galway In The Summer Of 1847

New Orleans Picayune, July 3, 1847 — The following circular from the Galway Industrial Society gives an appalling picture of the western coast of Ireland ...

"Sir — Destitution in this locality has already increased to such a frightful extent that it is utterly beyond our power to afford assistance to one-tenth of the wretched applicants for work or food. We have done and are doing as much as men can do to relieve their distress, but, in consequence of the high price of food and the impossibility of procuring employment for women and children, thousands of our fellow creatures are now dying — thousands are already dead ...

"I will not attempt to harrow your feelings by a detail of the sufferings I every day behold or of the still more dreaded accounts brought in from the country. Suffice it to say, that if some extraordinary exertion is not made, it is my deliberate opinion that not half the present population of Connaught will see the commencement of another year.

"A short sketch of our position at the present moment will immediately show you the truth of this.

"Our entire population were in either fishing or agriculture. Our coasts are alive with fish, but the severity of the past winter, a failure of the herring fishery, and the high price of food rendered it impossible for the fishermen to support their families by fishing; they pawned their nets, fishing tackling, &c., to provide food for their starving families.

"When this was done and the weather moderated, they could



not redeem those necessary articles and even if they could, 16s. worth of oatmeal (four stone) would be necessary to provision the boat which at this season must be out six days or a week...

"We are only now in the commencement of the famine. The fields are untillied and, with the exception of those in which potatoes grew last year or the year before (which have been re-dug in search of potatoes by the unfortunate people, many of whom I have seen at this work who were hardly able to hold a spade), present the same appearance now that they did five months ago.

"The reasons for this are, first, those persons holding under 10 acres of land have not money to buy seed and even if they had could not sow it, as one day's absence from the public works would starve themselves and their families. The women and children have not now strength to work in the field.

"Secondly, those holding from 10 to 50 acres who even if they had sufficient capital to crop their farms are afraid to ex-

pend it and thus deprive their families of certainty of food for even a short time. All are in debt for one, two or three years rent and many for meal and manure last season. These people are afraid to till as their entire crop would be seized for their debts and the resident landlords as a class cannot advance more money than they have already done.

"Lastly, the large farmers and resident country gentlemen, most of whom are working like men to till the land, for the preservation of themselves and their people, but encumbered by debts mostly accumulated by the last generation or incurred since the first failure of the potato, for meal and guano for their tenant, without rents, and with calls upon their charity which they have, as a class, met at their own doors with a nobleness for which they do not receive credit, it is utterly beyond their power to till the lands not occupied by themselves.

"This is our condition with hardly a hope for the future. The laborers have hardly the strength to do the work of boys; the fishermen are now so emaciated that in rough weather they could not work their boats. The town is full of orphans, boys and girls of ten or twelve years old, tottering under the weight of a smaller child. The poorhouse cannot receive another. Groups of little children shiver in our streets and ask in tones scarcely audible for bread. Widows and children were found last month, six families in a room, without food, fire or straw, some of the infants perfectly naked ...

Henry Barry Hyde
Secretary

Emigrants' Misery

New York Herald, Aug. 24, 1847 — The coroner was called to hold an inquest upon the body of Catherine Luce, a native of Ireland, aged 7 years, who died yesterday from exhaustion arising from want of proper nourishment. The parents of the deceased left Ireland with six children and took passage at Liverpool in the ship *Cornelius* which arrived here yesterday.

During the passage of six weeks, the subsistence of the family consisted of oatmeal. After being at sea for a few weeks, two of the children died, while the deceased and others became so emaciated as to render it almost difficult to say whether life was extinct or not.

It was ascertained ... that on arriving at quarantine, two physicians went on board and passed the deceased ... as well as others of the family, as being in good health, whereas on landing at the dock at the foot of Courtlandt street, one child died while another was found to be in the last stage of existence.

The family, after remaining exposed the greater part of the day to the hot sun and making repeated applications to the Commissioners of Emigration, they were finally taken charge of by the latter.

Pittsburgh Commercial, August 1847 — An Irish family arrived in our city a day or two ago, who are really in desperate circumstances. In crossing the Atlantic, the wife died leaving the husband with five children, the oldest a girl about nine years of age. Grief for the death of her mother so affected the mind of the girl that she became deranged. On their way to this city, the father was taken ill of a fever and on his arrival was entirely helpless. He was taken to the hospital and his children, utterly friendless, wandered about the wharf with their insane sister, until they sought refuge from the heat in an unfinished warehouse.

One Month's Mortality Toll At St. John

New Brunswick Courier, Aug. 7, 1847 — A list of passengers who have died in hospital on Partridge Island with their names and ages and the names of the vessels in which they arrived at Quarantine during the month of July 1847 —

From *Barque Amazon*, from Liverpool — Thomas Moran, aged 5 years; Mary Costello, 26; Mary Corry, 32; John Corrigan, 16; Cath. Hautagan, 22; Jane Partan, 20; Pat McCarran, 28; Edwd. McMullan, 5 months; James Looney, 20 years; Owen Corrigan, 52; John Craig, 14; John Johnston, 25; Razo Balin (seaman), 21; Margaret Mullin, 24; James Rooney, 15; Patrick Lausay, 45; Mick McGrath, 30; Timothy Connor, 25.

From *Barque Aldebaran*, from Sligo — Nora McManus, aged 40 years; Thomas Parat, 60; Winney Parat, 13; John McLynn, 50; Martha Jolly, 22; Hugh Dugan, 33; Thomas Dugan, 19; Ann Coleman, 5.

From *Ship Ambassadors*, from Liverpool — Sarah Cassidy, aged 20 years; Martin Speed, 4; Daniel McDougal, 25; Edward Looney, 24; Mick Sullivan, 5; Margaret Rooney, 26; Ellen Garr, 24.

From *Brig Bache McEvers*, from Cork — Mick McCarty, aged 24 years; Mary Kelly, 21; Eliza Noonan, 65; Margaret McCarty, 21; Mary Hogan, 26; Pat Connor, 56; Carty Sullivan, 14.

From *Brigantine Blanch*, from Donegal — Francis McArthur, aged 28 years.

From *Brigantine Caledonia*, from Cork — Ellen Wiseman, aged 25 years; Will. Ligam, 4; James Lunney, 28.

From *Brig Dealey*, from Bantry — Rachael Kingston, aged 33 years.

From *Brig Friends*, from Waterford — Jane Reardon, aged 32 years; Winfred Kennedy, 14.

From *Brig Hannah*, from Sligo — Michael Barran, aged 45 years; Mary McGowan, 28; Martin Maloney, 50; Daniel Garnet, 28; Catherine Dowd, 35; John Porthan, 38.

From ship *Sir Charles Napier*, from Londonderry, Thomas Boyer, aged 12; Will Boyer, 6.

(The list continues with 16 more ships and 59 more names)

Two In A Casket

New York Tribune, July 16, 1847 — The arrivals of emigrants from Europe at Quebec on the 6th inst. were 1,053.

The Rev. John Hawthorn of Armagh County, Ireland, who was for 27 years a Covenanting Presbyterian Minister, and his son, Hutchinson, aged 13 years, died of fever near Grosse Ile and were buried in the same coffin.

Mrs. Hawthorn and their other children are friendless in a land of strangers.

Crops Bountiful

London Times, Aug. 26, 1847 — I have just returned from an excursion through the province of Ulster ... I am happy to inform you that the grain crop is the finest I ever saw ... it now only waits the sickle to pour peace and plenty on the land ... With regard to the potato crop, it, no doubt, looks well; and, considering the advanced period and fineness of the season, I am strongly inclined to hope that it is safe ...

Edward Bullen

Relief Ends ...

Dublin Castle, Aug. 6, 1847 — Sir — The Relief Commissioners have received many communications from committees remonstrating against closing the temporary relief in their respective districts on the 15th of August ...

"The Temporary Relief Act was passed, not as a remedy for any financial embarrassments in the union, nor for any general poverty in the country, but solely to replace for one season the food of which the people were deprived by the failure of the potato crop, and the operation of the act was to be discontinued as the different crops of the ensuing season should come forward and provisions become more abundant. As these are gradually in course of being realized, the commissioners feel that their functions must close ...

... Nothing but compelling men to make greater efforts for self-support, and to avail themselves of means that are really within their reach, will prevent the great amount of disastrous results that must otherwise ensue ...

... Famine Doesn't

London Times, Aug. 31, 1847 — The subjoined remarkable proceedings took place at the last meeting of the guardians of the Limerick Poor Law Union:

Captain O'Brien inspecting officer of the union, wished to inform the guardians of the amount of destitution which would assuredly prevail before another fortnight ... the numbers on relief lists at the beginning of the week were: Limerick electoral division, 1,783; in the rural districts, 24,714 ... provision should be made ... to provide 1,783 persons in the city and 15,950 in the rural districts with out-door relief. Unless some remedy was immediately devised by the board the destitute would certainly starve."

'Catalpa Jim' spearheaded rescue of Fenians from Australia

(Continued from Page 1)

ward to mortgage his own home to make sure the expedition went forward.

On April 29, 1875, Reynolds was at New Bedford when the *Catalpa* sailed. To preserve appearances, the first six months of the voyage were spent hunting whales in the Atlantic and stops were made in the Azores and Canary Islands before the *Catalpa* finally set course for Australia in November.

Meanwhile, the committee sent two Irish-Americans, James Breslin and Thomas Desmond, ahead to Australia by a ship that sailed from San Francisco. Pretending to be a wealthy American interested in investing in Western Australia, Breslin put up at a hotel in Freemantle. So convincingly did he play his part that he was treated to a guided tour of the prison.

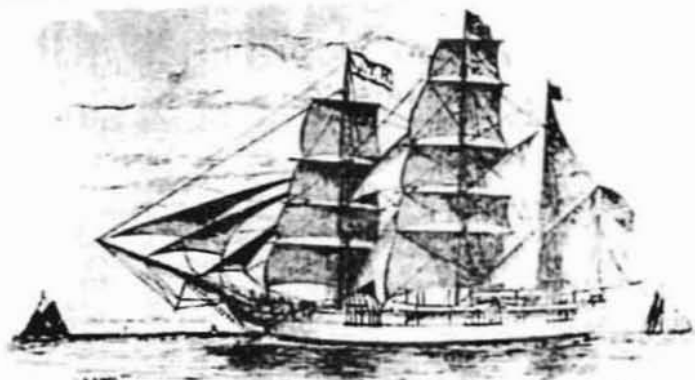
When the *Catalpa* docked at Bunbury, the nearest port to Freemantle, in late March 1876, Breslin contacted Anthony to make final arrangements. The prisoners were to walk away from their work details and meet Breslin and Desmond who would hire carriages. They would then make a dash for a deserted section of beach 20 miles from the prison. There Anthony would be waiting with a rowboat from the *Catalpa*, while the ship itself would remain outside territorial waters.

On Easter Monday, April 17, four of the prisoners left their cells on normal work duties. One of them had to return with a forged note saying the other two, Wilson and Harrington, were needed to move furniture to a prison official's residence.

Breslin and Desmond were waiting as planned and drove at breakneck speed to the rendezvous with crewmen from the *Catalpa*. Hopes for a speedy getaway were dashed when a storm blew up and the rescuers and the rescued spent 18 hours in the wind-tossed rowboat before they reached the *Catalpa* at 3 p.m. the next day.

They arrived just ahead of a British gunboat, the *Georgette*. When the

captain of that vessel fired a shot across the *Catalpa's* bow and ordered Anthony to lower his sails, the New Bedford captain pointed to the flag flying from his mast and replied, "This ship is sailing under an American flag and she is on the high seas. If you fire on me, I warn you that you are firing



The Catalpa

on the American flag."

Anxious minutes passed as the *Georgette* steamed alongside the whaler until finally turning away and returning to Bunbury.

Four months later, the *Catalpa* reached New York City to a tumultuous welcome by that city's Irish community. Among those greeting the ship was the New Havener primarily responsible for the financing of the rescue mission, the man who from that time on was known as *Catalpa Jim*. The rescue ship reached its home port of New Bedford on Aug. 24, 1876.

Years later, an Irish-American newspaper commented, "While the fame of this daring rescue shall last; while the name of *Catalpa* shall wake and fan the fires of Irish enthusiasm, so long will the name of James Reynolds be held in fond and loving remembrance. For it was he who mortgaged his home, who placed a chattel upon his household goods, who beggared himself for the time, that the sinews might be forthcoming to inaugurate and sustain the expedition. Other choice spirits lent him their counsels and their fortunes, but James Reynolds gave his all that the *Catalpa* rescue might be consu-

mated."

Reynolds' role in Fenian activities was so substantial and the *Catalpa* affair itself so distressing to the English that in May 1897, just two months before his death, the English government reportedly hired detectives to spy on a banquet given in his honor in New Haven.

"Thirteen detectives were here," reported the New Haven Leader, "three from Thill's agency in Chicago and 10 from Pinkerton's agency. In the last-named batch were some from Scotland Yard."

In its eulogy for Reynolds two months later, the New Haven Palladium stated: "Few deaths will be so generally and so sincerely regretted by the Irish-Americans in this city and this state ... Endeared to all Irishmen by his unselfish sacrifices in the interests of that cause when still a young man, he had by fair dealing with all men and a life of probity, come to be even more honored in his old age. In New Haven, James Reynolds' name stood for much that was good and honorable. In business, it stood for square dealing and associated with any movement it stood for honesty, fairness and justice."

A funeral Mass for Reynolds was celebrated at St. Patrick's Church and he was buried in St. Lawrence Cemetery. The monument over his grave there contains a replica of the ship which won the freedom of six Irish Fenians and the inscription "*Catalpa Jim*."

(Sources: "*The Fenians in Australia*" by Keith Amos; "*The Emerald Whaler*" by William J. Laubenstein; "*The Catalpa Expedition*" by Zephaniah Pease; *Meriden Morning Record*, June 1 and Aug. 24, 1897; *New Haven Register*, March 16, 1986; *Waterbury American*, March 3, 1908.)

Briefly noted

GROSSE ILE PILGRIMAGE — On Aug. 15-17, thousands of Irish-Americans from the United States and Canada will make a Famine memorial pilgrimage to Grosse Ile, the island in the St. Lawrence River about 20 miles from Quebec City. During the Irish Famine in the late 1840s, Grosse Ile was a quarantine station where ships from Ireland and England stopped and immigrants had to pass physical examinations before being allowed to enter the Canadian provinces. In the particularly terrible year of 1847 — 150 years ago this summer — thousands of Irish immigrants died either during the Atlantic crossing, at the hospital sheds on Grosse Ile or on their way down along the St. Lawrence River to Montreal and Toronto and the United States. Today there is a small patch of cemetery with white crosses without names marking the graves of some of those Irish people. The cemetery extends to a far larger area of the island, but has never been cleared. The island also contains some immigration buildings of later date and a large Celtic cross in memory of those who died there that year. A bus will leave New Haven on the morning of Aug. 15 to take part in the pilgrimage. The bus will return late on Aug. 17. Information and reservations may be obtained by contacting Sean Canning, 288-8347.

THANKS — Belated, but heartfelt thanks to Jim Sheehan for the magnificent banner commemorating the Great Hunger which we displayed on our float in the St. Patrick's Day parade in New Haven; to Chris Morgan for donating his truck for the float and actually driving it in the parade; to Jeanne Whalen for designing and constructing the statue of three famine victims; to Francis Whalen for his assistance; and, to the judges for selecting our float as the best in the parade.

MEMBERSHIPS — If you haven't done so, don't forget to renew your membership and remember us for gifts and memorials.

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society P.O. Box 120-020 East Haven, Connecticut 06512

"We have kept faith with the past; we have handed a tradition to the future."
Padraic Pearse

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Membership: \$10 individual; \$15 family. Send name, address and check made out to CIAHS at above address.

The Shanachie: In Ireland, a shanachie is a folklorist, historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.

Turkish evangelical visited Meriden



Capt. Garabad

A large crowd turned out in Meriden in July 1909 to hear a speech and a concert by one of the Salvation Army's most interesting officers — Capt. Garabad, otherwise known as "Joe the Turk."

Garabad was a native of Constantinople and the son of an Armenian priest. He immigrated to the United States in the 1880s and was converted to the Salvation Army cause in San Francisco.

Coming from an exotic background, he was used as a visiting speaker. Garabad, said the Meriden Record, "is not only a fine speaker, but a musician of more than usual ability. He plays the cornet, clarinet and saxophone and his music is a strong feature of the meetings he conducts. A large crowd heard him on Crown street square Wednesday evening and the Army hall was crowded."

(Source: Meriden Record, July 15, 1909)

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our historical society and the other members of the Ethnic Heritage Center, and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we print in each issue of The Shanachie one story about another ethnic group.

The shanachie

Vol. IX, No. 5

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society

September-October 1997

Open house at Ethnic Heritage Center on Sept. 28

President Jeanne Roche Whalen has extended an invitation to all members of the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society to an open house on Sunday, Sept. 28, at the Ethnic Heritage Center's new headquarters at Southern Connecticut State University.

The center's offices, exhibit space and activity hall are located in the Wintergreen Building, adjacent to Moore Fieldhouse and Jess Dow Field.

Whelan, who also serves as executive director of the Ethnic Heritage Center, said the open house will commence at 2 p.m. It will feature tours of the facilities by volunteers representing the Connecticut Irish history society, an explanation of the programs and exhibits which will be featured at the center and displays of the Irish society's archives. The growing archives fea-

ture manuscripts, books, periodicals, and other materials documenting the history of Irish people in Connecticut.

Refreshments will be served.

Whalen also announced that the center has received a \$5,000 technical assistance grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council. The purpose of the grant is to assess, evaluate, review and plan for use of the archives that are being set up at the center by the Irish history society and the other members of the Ethnic Heritage Center — the Ukrainian, Jewish, Italian and Afro-American historical societies — and to plan the physical layout of the center.

Dr. John Sutherland, historian and professor of history at Manchester Community College is conducting the survey. Judith A. Schiff, chief archivist at Yale Uni-

versity's Sterling Library is acting as archival consultant for the project. Philip Paoletta, past president of both the heritage center and the Italian-American Historical Society of Greater New Haven, is fiscal agent for the grant.

Whalen is also establishing a program for volunteers to participate in implementing the work of the heritage center. Members of the Irish history society interested in becoming involved should contact Whalen at The Ethnic Heritage Center at Southern Connecticut State University, Wintergreen Building #117, 501 Crescent St., New Haven 06515; telephone, (203) 392-6126.

Office hours at the center are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Those interested in visiting the center should call ahead to make an appointment.

Tragic 1880 murder left legacy in Connecticut courtrooms

On the first day of September in 1882, a tragedy in which both the victim and his assailant were Irish ended with a hanging in New Haven in a case that has left a legacy in Connecticut's legal system.

Two years earlier, the tragedy began when a wild young Irish lad named James Smith — known by the nickname "Chip" — got drunk in a saloon in Ansonia.

Smith fired a pistol in the saloon and later threatened to use it on a foreman at the Osborne, Cheese-

man and Co. factory where he had been rejected for employment. Eventually, he went home and got into a heated argument with his mother. When he left, she sent word to Ansonia Police Chief Daniel J. Hayes asking him to apprehend her son before he got into serious trouble.

Hayes caught up with Smith at the Railroad Hotel near the depot and asked him to surrender his gun. Smith denied that he was carrying a weapon. Hayes took the youth by the arm to lead him away,

but Smith resisted, saying he would go if Hayes released his arm.

"Hayes released his hold upon his prisoner," reported the New Haven Register, "and the latter immediately drew his pistol and shot him. The ball entered his abdomen."

Although wounded, Hayes was able, with the assistance of a bystander, to drag the youth off to the lockup. On the way, there was another scuffle and a second gunshot "the bullet whistling harmlessly by Smith's captors, but coming very
(Please turn to Page 3)

Family History

TAX LISTS — Because of the almost complete destruction of the Irish census records of the 19th century, researchers use two land tax surveys taken in mid-century as the nearest substitutes for information these censuses would have provided us today on the mass of Irish population before and during the period of greatest emigration. The Tithe Applotment Survey (ca. 1823-1840) is a description of each plot of rural land on which the occupier, usually the renter, was responsible for paying an annual tax to the established Church of Ireland, even if not a member of that church, as most Irish were not. As a listing of heads of households, the survey is often incomplete. For instance, one person may be the taxpayer for several households which shared the land. Also missing are persons who rendered service directly to a landlord in lieu of rent. However, this remains the earliest surviving record which places names of non-landowning Irish on specific plots of land for almost the entire island. The Griffith's Valuation (ca. 1848-1864) is a survey of all land in Ireland, rural and urban, taken to determine the amount each occupant would pay to support Poor Law Unions, jurisdictions first authorized in 1838 to provide relief to paupers. The "primary valuation," as the initial survey was called, listed almost all heads of households, along with the name of the immediate landlord (tenants often subleased from another tenant or agent), the size and condition of the property, its valuation and the tax due, printed on a standard form.

HOUSEHOLDER'S INDEX — Since it would be difficult to locate a family in either of these records without knowing where they lived, the National Library of Ireland created, several decades ago, a "Householder's Index," to surnames in both surveys. The index is the key to finding an ancestor. For each county, an alphabetized list of surnames found in both surveys was created. Following each name is the barony it appears in (a barony is a now-obsolete division of a county, comprising a number of civil parishes). If a surname appears in more than one barony, it is repeated. Following the barony name is a letter "G" if the surname appears in Griffith's Valuation in that barony and a "T" if it appears in the Tithe Applotment Survey. A number following the "G" indicates how many times the name appears in that barony, but no such numbering accompanies a "T."

PARISHES — After the list of names by barony is another listing showing the same names distributed within each civil parish of each barony, also in alphabetical sequence. Maps of county and barony boundaries accompany the index. Many immigrants accompanied or followed others from the same or neighboring parishes and settled in the same American town. Searching the Householder's Index for the surnames of in-laws, cousins, marriage and baptismal witnesses may increase the chance of locating your ancestral parish and townland.

MICROFILMS — The Householder's Index and the two surveys have been microfilmed and are available in the Mormon Family History Library. Find the parishes to be searched by checking the index which is listed alphabetically by county on seven rolls of film numbered 919,001 to 919,007. The Family History Library catalog will help you determine which reels of film to rent. The Tithe Applotment Survey is catalogued under "Ireland, Land and Property," then within that, "Ireland, Land Commission," then "Applotment Books." It is filmed alphabetically by parish and within each parish by townland. The Griffith's Valuation is catalogued under "Ireland, Land and Property," then, "Ireland, General Valuation Office." It is filmed by county, then barony, Poor Law Union, civil parish and townland.

— Paul R. Keroack

Immigrants recruited for Russian army

Immigrants of all nationalities often have found themselves involved in the politics of their native lands.

In 1904, shortly after a simmering dispute between Russia and Japan led to a declaration of war, Russian agents were reported to be recruiting soldiers among Connecticut's immigrants who had not yet become American citizens.

"In New Britain a few days ago," one newspaper reported, "an agent of the Russian government worked among the Russian and Polish laborers with considerable success ... It is expected that a number of the czar's subjects will go back to their native land and enlist in the army."

The agent reportedly went through the factories where the immigrants worked in New Britain offering free transportation back to Russia along with higher pay than they were making plus such benefits as board, clothing and medical treatment.

Russian agents also visited Meriden where they were said to have arranged appointments to talk with the immigrants in their homes rather than at their workplaces.

The agents also were very careful, it was reported, to approach only those Russians and Poles who had not yet become naturalized U.S. citizens, so as not to arouse any opposition because of American neutrality in the war.

The agents also steered clear of the significant number of Russian natives who were not at all sympathetic to the czar's government and who actually hoped that Japan would win the war.

(Source: Meriden Record, Aug. 16, 1904.)

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Perspective

With most public works closed down and with a smaller crop because of the scarcity of seed, the Irish people awaited with trepidation the third winter of the Famine period.

Reports from throughout the country told of extreme destitution, of people dying by the thousands and of almost no employment by which the people might earn money for food.

Added to the woes of the peasants, the British Parliament had approved a new Poor Law which contained a provision, proposed by landlords, that was to multiply the suffering.

The "quarter-acre clause" provided that any Irish tenants who occupied more than a quarter acre of land could not be eligible to receive public assistance. The provision forced the tenants to give up their lands to receive assistance and encouraged landlords to begin wholesale evictions from their property.

The evictions quickened the pace of flight from Ireland with ports like Liverpool becoming havens for masses of starving Irish.

Influential London journals fumed about the burden being placed upon the English people and the indolence of the suffering Irish.

FAMINE JOURNAL

Published bimonthly during the 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. Copyright 1997, the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, P.O. Box 120-020, East Haven CT 06512.

Leitrim Decimated By Deaths ...

Dublin, September 28, 1847 — The chairman then read the reply returned to the queries forwarded from the General Central Relief Committee by the rector of Annaduff, county Leitrim, who had the authority of the Rev. Mr. Geraghty, the Catholic clergyman of the parish, for putting his name to the return. It appeared from it that the population of the parish was 5,000; the gross number of persons totally destitute about one half or two thirds; deaths from starvation since the commencement of the disease in the potato



crop until the 25th of September, 1847, about 400; deaths from disease produced by starvation during the same period about 300; number of persons now affected with disease, fever, dysentery, &c., probably 800 and scarcely a house free from fever in the parish; perhaps not one-twentieth part of the arable land has been cultivated, say about 500 acres ... the crop would not support the population of the parish, even if the landlord, poor rate or cess collectors get nothing from them ... he did not see how the poor could live during the ensuing winter ... Few parishes are in a more distressed condition than this. The failure of crops, both potatoes and oats, has now gone on for several years in succession, and utterly impoverished the poor farmers as well as the cottiers ...

... And By Forced Emigration

Sworn before me at Grosse Isle, in the district of Quebec, this 12th day of September 1847 — Bryan Prior, labourer, late of the parish of Drumreilly, county Leitrim, Ireland, and being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists, depose and saith, That he was a tenant of Dr. Collins, in the parish of Drumreilly, and occupied a piece of land of five acres; that he has a wife and four children, the eldest under 12 years; that upwards of six weeks previous to his leaving home, he and his family were wholly deprived of relief; that, when in an actually state of starvation, Mr. Benson, agent to Dr. Collins, demanded of this deponent the surrender of his piece of land, and promised to give him immediate relief if he gave up his land; being in a state of starvation, he did give up his land and his house was immediately pulled down to the ground, leaving his wife and four children standing in the field, without a covering or any other place to lay their heads. The land being of insufficient value, as estimated by Mr. Benson, the agent, he refused to send deponent's wife and children with him to America, saying, at the same time that it was quite expensive enough to send him and that he might be thankful for it. The wife and children of this deponent are now in Ireland, without a house or home, as far as this deponent has any knowledge of their condition, and in a most distressed state of mind, without money, clothing or food.

R. Symes, Justice of the Peace

English Viewpoint

The London Spectator, Oct. 16, 1847 — The "normal" state of Ireland is an enormity: it is that of a fertile country with abundant labour, which does not grow food enough to support the people and which makes no real effort to supply the deficiency ...

Irish property will not pay for Irish pauperism, the landowners say they can't afford it; and so England is called upon to maintain the destitute of Ireland. The season of begging for Ireland reopens tomorrow, the 17th instant, with a collection in the churches under the Queen's letter. Indignation is felt by many humane persons in England because they cannot forget the claims of our own hard-working poor, so long postponed in favour of the semi-voluntary destitution of the Irish poor, who won't work even when they may ... The English labourer submits to intense toil, because he labours under the dread of starvation: that which is to the English labourer a penalty "in terrorem" has been actually incurred by the apathetic indolence of the Irish labourer, who is content to run the risk of starvation in order to avoid hard and incessant work; and it is not just to exempt the Irishman from a penalty which the Englishman avoids by his own exertion. During the summer, the apathetic creatures, counting on future aid from England if extorted by "necessity" have neglected even to store peat for their winter fuel.

True, yet England cannot deliberately suffer the people to starve unhelped, even from their own fault; besides, the poor cannot get effective employment sufficient to maintain them, because there is no employment ...

Society In Chaos

Ballinakill, Clifden, Co. Galway, Sept. 19, 1847 — Sir, I gratefully acknowledge your favour of the 16th enclosing half notes to the amount of £3 for the poor of this district ... Society is on the verge of being reduced to chaos ... As to labour, there is no public works in this district except one pier, at which twenty men scarcely find employment ... and as to private labour among landlords and tenant farmers there is no more to be found because the landlords are non-resident and the few of them who are resident are not able or willing to employ any ... the potato crop is gone and grain sowing is late and not available for present use, one-third of the soil is lying waste ... Taking all the tillage of any kind in this district, I am certain it will not be sufficient to feed even for one month the remnant of the population which has survived the ravages of the famine ...

The landlords and the guardians will insist on the quarter acre clause and already the ukase has been issued by one that 700 tenants should be reduced to 120 holdings ... How awful to see those creatures who were thus banished from their cabins, which were demolished a few days ago, carrying a few sooty sticks on their backs and placing them and a few scraws over pits, sunk by them into the mountain to shelter them as long as they are permitted to remain in those pits ... Fever is sure to accompany them in those abodes of death, and often in the day I am obliged to creep into those dens to administer the sacraments to the dying creatures. In one hovel, I found five persons sick of fever, all stretched on the wet boggy earth, without covering over them ... I can assure you this is not an isolated case of distress but is nearly the case with the whole population.

William Flannelly

Liverpool Invaded

Bells Life in London, Oct. 31, 1847 — The Liverpool Standard says: We noticed last week the increasing influx of paupers from the sister island, and remarked that those now arriving were the worst class, and never likely, if indeed willing, to become a self-supporting population. This week we have to notice a further arrival of 1,723 men, 935 women and 475 children — in all 3,133 persons, which make up the number, from the 1st to the 24th, of 11,772, against 10,369, the total arrivals in all September ... Not only are the bulk of them of the most confirmed description of paupers, ragged, filthy and half-starved, but from the moment of their arrival, the women and children especially, commence the practice of petty pilfering around our docks and in our streets. They surround the carts and waggons laden with cotton or make their way to the bales as they are landed on the quays or are hoisted into the warehouses in such swarms and with such determination that it is found impossible to prevent portions of the contents being abstracted ... They are still more eager in their attempts upon anything in the shape of food — wheat, India corn, &c. To a number of those brought up on Saturday week at the police court, Mr. Rushton put the question whether they were wishful to be sent back to their own country. In every case, however, an evasive answer was returned and the magistrate sent them to gaol for a month ... That to the bulk of the prisoners thus committed imprisonment in a gaol is no punishment, may be inferred from the fact that as fast as they have been released hitherto, they have rushed to the commission of some petty crime to entitle them to a few weeks more of the comfortable lodging and good food which any one of our gaols affords, compared with the wretchedness to which they have been accustomed.

Most Appalling

Limerick Reporter, Oct. 8, 1847 — A letter received from a high personage in Dungarvan, (Co. Waterford) whose heart bleeds for the state of things he depicts, contains the following intelligence — "Our state of famine here is most appalling. The buzz of business was completely hushed, our square once so animated, silent as the desert, more than one thousand postulants yesterday for the relief at the poor house gate; which with the adjoining premises, is guarded by police, horse and foot; the guardians being obliged to make their entrance through a file of armed men. Where will all this end? At least 15,000 of the poor people of this parish have been lost within the last year. By next Christmas I very much fear one half of the population will be swept away ..."

About To Perish

Ballinagarry, County Limerick, Sept. 28, 1847 — Dear Sir, I beg leave to submit to you, as chairman of the Newcastle Board of Guardians, the absolute necessity of prompt relief for the very many who are on the point of perishing for want in this Electoral Division. The able-bodied cannot find employment, the harvest is over, there is no drainage to employ a single man, the threshing as you know is effected by the servant men and sons of the farmer and by the threshing machine of the gentleman and in hundreds of cases the labourer and his family are living on cabbage, without a morsel of farinaceous food once a week; in very many cases, he must beg even for the cabbage ... I again entreat you and your colleagues not to lose a moment in rescuing the poor from death and the community from the dreadful results of despair ...

**Michael Fitz-Gerald
Parish Priest**

Evictions Increase

London Times, Oct. 20, 1847 — Two cases of (the clearance system) are mentioned in the provincial papers ... The first is from the Tuam Herald and runs as follows "... Mr. O'Hara subsequently proceeded to the village of Slieyard, part of the Belmont property ... and dispossessed 18 families, whose houses were levelled with the ground leaving over 100 unfortunate human beings without a place of shelter, on the approach of the bleak winter's blast. ..."

The second is remarkable as occurring in a county where undue severity to tenants is seldom or never heard of, harsh landlordism in Wexford being the exception to the rule: "It is with deep pain and alarm," says the Wexford Independent, "we hear it stated that some landlords of our county, who took and received credit for their indulgence to their tenants during the past year are now availing themselves of the helpless condition of those tenants by taking proceedings for eviction, as the poor people owe arrears which they are unable to pay. We have been told of one landlord having already turned out six families and several notices to quit upon several others. A still more distressing case, though only that of a single family, has been communicated to us. It is the case of a poor widow with six children, turned out of a holding which she had occupied for 40 years and obliged to seek immediate refuge in the workhouse. Twenty years ago, we are told, her then landlord when he was dying recommended her to the protection of his successor, whom he enjoined never to turn her out or raise the rent on her. This injunction was faithfully observed by the gentleman to whom it was addressed. But now he is dead and has been succeeded by another who knew not the poor widow and paid no attention to her claims. Such is the melancholy statement made to us."

'Chip Smith charge' originated in shooting of Irish policeman

(Continued from Page 1)

near striking a farmer on the same side of the street." Some said the second shot came from Hayes' gun.

After locking Smith up, Hayes went home. A doctor looked at the wound and pronounced it life-threatening.

Several attempts were made to locate the bullet that evening, but were unsuccessful. Doctors were brought in from New Haven to lend their expertise, but Hayes' condition gradually worsened and he died on Monday afternoon, Dec. 27.

An autopsy revealed that the bullet had lacerated his intestines in four places and that any one of the wounds would have been fatal.

Smith was charged with first degree murder and brought to trial in Superior Court in New Haven in April 1881 with Chief Justice C.J. Park presiding. He was represented by L.N. Blydenburgh and T.J. Fox, who attempted to convince the jury that Hayes had been shot by his own weapon during the scuffle on the way to the jail.

After hearing the evidence, the jury deliberated 4 1/2 hours and then asked for an explanation of "deliberate intent" one of the requisites for a first-degree murder conviction. The jury then retired and returned within half an hour with a verdict of guilty.

Smith's lawyers appealed the verdict on several grounds, one involving the question of jurors being influenced by each other.

Even though there had been no serious or prolonged disagreement, Smith's lawyers asked that the verdict be overturned because Park had not complied with their request that jurors be told "each juror in this case must be governed by his own judgment, founded upon the law and the evidence, and must not be governed, controlled or influenced by the judgment or opinions of others in agreeing to a verdict."



Chief Daniel J. Hayes



James "Chip" Smith

On that point, the Supreme Court of Errors ruled, contrary to what Smith's lawyers argued, that jurors who find themselves in the minority do have an obligation to listen to and weigh carefully the arguments of the majority.

"If much the larger number of the panel are for conviction," said the appeals court, "a dissenting juror should consider whether the doubt in his own mind is a reasonable one which makes no impression upon the minds of so many men equally honest, equally intelligent with himself, who have heard the same evidence, with the same attention, and with equal desire to arrive at the truth, and under the sanction of the same oath."

"And on the other hand, if a majority are for acquittal, the minority ought seriously to ask themselves whether they may not reasonably, and ought not to, doubt the conclusions of a judgment which is not concurred in by most of those with whom they are associated ..."

The appeals court found no reason to overturn the verdict rendered by the jury, and its reasoning on the specific question of jurors influencing other jurors has come down in Connecticut legal practice

under the name of "the Chip Smith charge."

To this day, in cases where jurors have deliberated for a considerable time without arriving at a verdict, Connecticut judges instruct them about the Supreme Court of Errors finding in the Chip Smith case, namely that those jurors who are in the minority should give serious thought to the logic of the majority position.

For his part, Smith was sentenced to be hanged at New Haven on Sept. 1, 1882.

The day before, he was visited for a final time by his mother and father, sisters, brother and aunt and by Father Daily and some Sisters of Mercy from Ansonia.

On the morning of his execution, he was attended by several priests including Father Michael McGivney of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, the moving force behind the founding of the Knights of Columbus.

"Father McGivney," said the Register, "blessed him and they tenderly kissed each other. There were tears on the father's face when he turned away."

(Source: *New Haven Register*, Sept. 1, 1882)

Briefly noted

DANBURY FESTIVAL — Our society will have a table at the Greater Danbury Irish Festival on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 20-21, at Rogers Park in Danbury. The festival is sponsored by Gildea Division 3, Ancient Order of Hibernians.

MEMORIAL — The following memorial has been received: donation in memory of Uncle Cornelius Fitzgerald by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Hughes Jr. to purchase a book related to Irish history and to Con's heroes, Michael Collins, Liam Lynch and Terence MacSwiney, to be inscribed according to the donors' request.

CELEBRATION OF UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY — Jeanne Roche Whelan will be the leader for a six-week study group program entitled, "The Actual Enumeration: The Ethnic History of New Haven from 1790 to 1990," in Albertus Magnus College's Institute for Learning in Retirement. The program will be on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3 p.m. from Sept. 30 to Nov. 4. For information, call Jeanne Alterman, 865-6744; Augusta Thomas, 288-7282; or Larry Tiven, 795-3651.

YALE GOES GREEN — An exhibit titled "Irish Paintings from the Collection of Brian P. Burns" will be featured at the Yale Center for British Art, 1080 Chapel St., New Haven, from Sept. 25 through Jan. 4, 1998. The 70 paintings in the exhibit will cover a period from 1840 to the early years of the 20th century. The center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For information, call (203) 432-2800.

BUS TRIP — The Retirees Group of the Irish-American Community Center in New Haven will sponsor a fall foliage bus trip to Woodstock, Vt., on Oct. 2. The bus will leave from the lower parking lot of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Hamden. For information, call Joan Atzbach, 288-8519.

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society P.O. Box 120-020 East Haven, Connecticut 06512

"We have kept faith with the past; we have handed a tradition to the future."
Padraic Pearse

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Vice Pres.: George Waldron, 145 Corbin Road, Hamden 06517.

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Shanachie Editor: Neil Hogan, 26 Crestview Terr., Wallingford 06492. 269-9154.

Membership: \$10 individual; \$15 family. Send name, address and check made out to CIAHS at above address.

The Shanachie: In Ireland, a shanachie is a folklorist, historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.

Irish immigrant 'mothered' Yalies

The return of collegians to Connecticut universities for the fall semester brings to mind the story of one 19th century Irish immigrant who played a major role in the lives of many New Haven students.

Miss Mary Kalaher — more frequently written "Kelleher" — was reportedly the first woman to operate a boarding house for Yale University students.

Kalaher came to America from Ireland in the 1830s or 1840s when she was just a girl and a few years later opened a boardinghouse at 387 Temple St.

Eventually she operated several boardinghouses for the students, one of which was known as "Sheffield Freshman Row," because many students from the Sheffield Scientific School roomed there.

During 38 years of operating the homes, Kalaher became a legend at Yale.

At the time of her death at the age of 85 in 1917, one New Haven newspaper wrote: "She practically mothered many struggling Sheffield men and for years she had more students clamoring after rooms in her house than she could accommodate."

"'Mother' Kalaher, as she was familiarly known," the paper continued, "was always resorted to for advice and comfort by the Yale men in their student days and twenty years afterwards, it is said, Sheffield men have sent their sons to her with a note saying that they wished their sons to live with her, remembering the treatment of their own college days and their life in 'Kalaher's.'"

Several years before her death, Kalaher went to California to visit a sister, Anna Wall, and "at that time she met scores of Yale men who had spent many a night under her roof. She related upon her return how she had been royally treated by her "boys" on the trip out and back.

(Source: *New Haven Union*, June 11, 1917.)

The shanachie

Vol. IX, No. 6

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society

November-December 1997

New London Puritan had problem with Irish servant girl

While the employment of Irish women as domestic servants in the homes of well-to-do Americans is associated mostly with the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the practice began long before that.

An exchange of letters in the early 1700s between members of the prominent and powerful Winthrop family of Massachusetts and Connecticut attests to that and says a great deal about the relationship and the conditions under which the Irish women worked.

The first letter was written on Aug. 28, 1717, by Wait Winthrop of Boston, son of John Winthrop Jr., an early governor of Connecticut. Wait wrote the letter to his son, John, who was then living in New London. John had an indentured Irish servant named Rachel and she is discussed at length in the letter.



After opening with some casual conversation about selling a cow, Wait tells his son that he has talked with a man named Hambleton who

apparently just returned from a trip to New London.

"Says he saw you Wednesday last," Wait wrote, "he lives at Capt. Lattimers farm, I doubt a palavering fellow, says you use Rachel hardly. She was to have 50 shillings when her 4 years ware up, by her owne and her masters agreement. I doubt he or som others give her no good advice ... That fellow says you threaten to send Rachel to Virginia; a little prudence will make her easy."

The tone of the letter suggests that Wait puts some credence in what Hambleton says about Rachel being used "hardly" since he does not consider him to be an idle gossip.

Gentle as it was, however, the admonition — fortunately for the

(Continued on page 2)

HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES

Sunday, Dec. 14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Champagne brunch at the Irish-American Community Center, Venice Place, East Haven. We will have a booth and will be selling books on Irish topics, children's books and our own books, "The Wearin' O' the Green," and "Green Sprigs from the Emerald Isle." We will also accept orders for memberships as Christmas gifts.

Sunday, Jan. 4, 1 to 3:30 p.m.

The CIAHS and the Irish History Roundtable will host a tea to celebrate Nollaig na mBan, or Women's Christmas. The Christmas season ends in Ireland on Jan. 6, the Feast of the Epiphany when it is customary to serve a more "feminine" version of the Christmas Day meal by offering tea and dainties. Our Nollaig na mBan will be held at the home of Noreen and Tom Slater, 82 Deer Hill Road, Hamden, and will include a short program on Christmas customs in Ireland. Tickets are \$10 each and space is limited. For reservations, call: Maureen Delahunt, 272-7144; Pat Heslin, 248-6050, after 6 p.m. please; Elizabeth Dalton, 288-9035; or Virginia McClelland, 239-2417 after 7 p.m.

New London Puritan complained of pernicious Irish servant

(Continued from page 1)

historical record — was sufficient to trigger a lengthy defense by John in a return letter. "It is not convenient now to write the trouble & plague we have had with this Irish creature the year past," the son wrote from New London. "Lying & unfaithfull; would doe things on purpose in contradiction & vexation to her mistress; lye out of the house anights and have contrivances with fellows that have been stealing from our estate & gett drink out of ye cellar for them; saucy & impudent, as when we have taken her to task for her wickedness she has gone away to complain of cruell usage.

"I can truly say we have used this base creature with a great deal of kindness & lenity. She would frequently take her mistresses capps & stockings, hanckerchers, &c., and dress herselfe, and away without leave among her companions. I may have said some time or other when she has been in fault, that she was fitt to live nowhere butt in Virginia and if she would not mend her ways, I should send her thither; tho I am sure no body would give her passage thither to have her service for 20 years, she is such a high spirited pernicious jade.

"Robin has run away near ten days, as you will see by the inclosed, and this creature knew of his going and of his carrying out 4 dozen bot-

Winthrop family had ties with Ireland



JOHN WINTHROP, THE YOUNGER
Founder of New London, May 6, 1646, Governor of Connecticut, 1657, 1659-1676

corage. I am persuaded he is very honest ..." In 1634, Fitz-John sailed for England, but his ship was driven ashore at Galway and he spent some months traveling in Ireland and taking a special interest in its ironworks. Upon his return to America, he established ironworks first at Lynn, Mass., and subsequently in New Haven at Lake Saltonstall in what is today East Haven. Among the workmen he brought to New Haven from Lynne to operate the ironworks were Patrick Moran, who was clerk of the works, and John Rylie.

(Source: "Ireland & America," *Their Early Associations, 1500-1640*, by David B. Quinn, pp. 33-35. "The Younger John Winthrop," by Robert C. Black III, pp. 79-81. *New Haven Colony Records*, May 7, 1667, page 204, and January 1667, pages 117ff.)

tles of cyder, metheglin & palme wine out of the cellar amongst the servants of the towne, and meat and I know not what. The bottles they broke & threw away after they had drank up the liquor and they got up our sheep anight, kill'd a fatt one and roasted and made merry with it before morning."

Looking back from the distance of 260 years and having only one side of the story makes it difficult to sort everything out. Whatever grievances John Winthrop had against the Irish woman, it seems possible she may have had some of her own.

In his letter, for example, Wait says she "was to have 50 shillings when her 4 years ware up." Does

that mean that John was holding her as a servant after her indenture had expired or that he was refusing to give her the 50 shillings that apparently were due her by provisions of her indenture agreement?

And does the fact that he threatened to ship her off to Virginia indicate that she was being held in such servitude that he had the power to do just that if he wanted?

And, if Rachel was as much trouble as John claims — lying, dressing up in her mistress' clothing, cavorting with male companions and, if not actually stealing, at least looking the other way while others stole from the Winthrops —

why didn't he dismiss her? Certainly with his family wealth and position, he could have easily replaced her with another servant, Irish or otherwise.

The letter to John was the last that Wait wrote. He fell ill on Nov. 3 and died on Nov. 7, and it is not even known if he saw the reply written by his son to his prodding about Rachel.

John eventually went to London to contest some land claims and died there in the 1740s. What became of Rachel is unknown.

(Source: *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Sixth Series, Vol. V, 1892, pp. 352-354.*)

Perspective

Their facilities stretched far beyond capacity and operating on the verge of bankruptcy, the workhouses of Ireland had by the winter of 1847-48 become charnel houses. Disease and death often awaited the thousands of peasants who flocked to the workhouses with the closing of the public works.

The despair of the peasants boiled over in threats and violence against landlords. In one notorious case, three assassins shot and killed Major Denis Mahon of Strokestown in Roscommon. Officials and newspapers were quick to blame the Strokestown parish priest for inciting the assassins with accusations against Mahon in a sermon and to point out that Mahon had paid the passage of many of his starving tenants to America. The priest, Michael M'Dermott, denied the charges and suggested that the inhumanities suffered by the peasants were the true cause of the murder.

The plight of immigrants fleeing the Famine was portrayed poignantly in letters from seaports in America. Those who survived the uprooting, described the hardships of the voyage and sadly listed the names of their companions who had died en route.

FAMINE JOURNAL

Published bimonthly during the 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. Copyright 1997, the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, P.O. Box 120-020, East Haven CT 06512.

Disease And Death In Workhouses

Kilrush Union, Co. Clare, Nov. 18, 1847 — The admissions to the workhouse amounted to nearly 200. Such a tangled mass of poverty, filth and disease, as the applicants presented, I have never seen. Numbers in all stages of fever and small-pox mingling indiscriminately with the crowd and all clamouring for admission. I had them separated as quickly as possible. Their misery and utter helplessness baffles description. The parents of a large family often displaying hardly the sagacity of an animal. It was really an appalling sight. The Chairman and Guardians present, regardless of personal danger, examined and admitted them to the house or hospital. I was in the house from 11 o'clock A.M. till 6 1/2 o'clock P.M. and returned to my lodgings covered with vermin.

Captain Kennedy

Ballina Union, Co. Mayo, Dec. 12, 1847 — The number of inmates in the workhouse makes its condition so very alarming that I feel myself bound to call on you, if you think you have authority to do so, to remove from the house, in such way as you think best, the extra number beyond what it was built to accommodate. There are at present, as I understand, 1,500 individuals in a house intended, as you are aware, to contain not more than 1,200. I found, on going through the house to-day, that fever has become very prevalent among the children. The manner in which paupers are crowded together in their sleeping apartments, is so very frightful that I apprehend the most shockingly fatal consequences ...

Mr. Devlin



Roscommon Union, Co. Roscommon, Dec. 16, 1847 — I arrived here on Tuesday last and immediately waited on the Vice Chairman of the Board of Guardians ... I then inspected the workhouse, and from what I could hear, everything connected with the workhouse is in a deplorable state. The house has nearly 200 over the number for which it was built, and upwards of 100 fever patients in the body of it. The house is in debt £6,222 out of which there is upwards of £3,000 due the baker. He has just been with me and has informed me that unless there is something done for him, he must discontinue the supply which would close the house ...

Captain Evans

Carrick-on-Shannon Union, Co. Leitrim, Nov. 14, 1847 — I beg to call the attention of the Poor Law Commissioners to the state of this Union, as one requiring the most prompt and energetic interference. It is unnecessary to call to their recollection the deaths in this workhouse during last winter ... I write not to complain of the past, but to beg that the commissioners will assist in saving human life ... There were more than 200 applicants for admission yesterday, many of them evidently starving; not one could be admitted from the state of the funds.

Rev. P. Dawson

Strokestown Owner Is Assassinated

London Times, Nov. 8, 1847 — Major Mahon was returning from Roscommon ... in an open carriage, accompanied by Dr. Shanly of Strokestown and a servant when within about four miles of that town he was fired at and shot dead. We have been informed that three men, armed with guns, lay behind the ditch waiting his arrival. On the carriage coming up, the first fired and slightly wounded Dr. Shanly. Almost at the same instant, the second fired, hitting the major in the neck and chest with heavy duck shot ... He only uttered the expression, "Oh God," and was dead.

Priest Denies Inciting Murder

Strokestown, December 1847 — Sir, As a Roman Catholic priest ... I have now to assure the public ... that the late Major Mahon was never denounced, nor even his name mentioned, from any chapel altar in Strokestown or within 20 miles of Strokestown ... It is not true that the exterminated tenants of Major Mahon have been all sent to America. There are hundreds as yet who survived their expulsion after seeing their crops carried away from their doors and safely deposited within the landlord's haggard — left to subsist on the precarious alms of their neighbours, roving as houseless wanderers ... Is it not then easy to imagine persons labouring under such privations and afflictions, having no food or shelter and finding no refuge ... should become frantic from despair and lose all reasonable control over the bad passions of our nature?

Michael M'Dermott

Coffin Makers Kept Very Busy

Tipperary Free Press, December 1847 — A gentleman named O'Brien ... states that in the electoral division of Michelstown and Marshalstown, county Cork, a contractor supplied the relief committee with the frightful number of 2,400 coffins in five months. This out of a population of 14,000 souls.

Famine Census In Elphin Diocese

Limerick Reporter, Nov. 5, 1847 — The first topic is to save the people's lives, to relieve the distress which is accumulating every day. In the papers of last week, we have the first returns made to our reverend bishops in pursuance of the resolution come to by them (to make a census of the starving in each parish). At present, we have only a partial return from the diocese of the amiable and beloved bishop of Elphin ... the number of families who are at this moment perishing from want of food:

Tavanagh, Co. Sligo	300
St. John's &c.	1,353
Ahamlish	450
Kilcorkery, Roscommon	98
Kilroess	370
Fuerty	294
Elphin	750
Aughana	350
Bashek	600
Clofenlough & Lisanuffy ...	300
Athlone	1,500
Killeemad	491
Ballintubber	487
Kilkeevan	430
Roscommon	1,015
Ogula	620
Athleague	300
Creeve	200
Boyle	730

Letters Describe Horrors Of Immigration

St. John, New Brunswick, Nov. 17, 1847 — Dear mother and brother. I take the favourable opportunity of writing these few lines to you hoping to find you are all in as good health as this leaves me and my sister at present thanks be to God for all his mercies to us. Dear mother, we are very uneasy for ever coming to this country for we were in a bad state of health. During the voyage there was a very bad fever aboard. Peppy was taken to the cabin by the captain's wife and was there from we were a week on sea till we came to quarantine and took the fever on the ship. Then all the passengers that did not pass the doctor was sent to the island and she was kept by the captain's wife then. On leaving the ship, Peppy was relapsed again and sent to hospital and remained there nine or ten days but thanks be to God we got over all the disorders belonging to the ship ... Mary took a very bad fever and was despaired of both by priest and doctor. And as soon as she got well Andy took the same disease. I am sorry to relate that poor Biddy Clancy and Catharine M'Gowan died in hospital and a great many of our friends. There is a prospect of the winter being very bad and I often wished to be at home again, bad and all as we were. We often wished we never seen St. John ... The government are about to send all the passengers that were sent out here by Lord Palmerston and Sir Robert home again because they are sure that all of them that did not perish they surely will this winter ... I am very glad that Catharine did not come to this place for a great deal of our neighbours died here. I am sorry to inform ye that James Connolly of Glaniff and wife died and three children. Thady Freely died in hospital and Daniel Gallagher and wife of Coolagrapy and Roger M'Gowan of Drinaghan, Patt Giblin and his brother Dominick and I was very (sad) when I heard that Thady Giblin died ... I am sorry to tell that a great deal of our ... passengers died in hospital. Mich Walters of Grange died and James Gilmartin of Newtown ... Bridget Conoly was given up and was in the quarantine island six weeks and her child died in the island.

Bryan Clancy and sister

Saint John, New Brunswick, Dec. 25, 1847 — Brother Roger, I take the opportunity of sending you these few lines hoping to find you all in as good health as this leaves us at present, thanks be to God for his mercy towards us. As for the time past, I cannot tell you the one half of my sickness and disease. When I left Ireland I never was stronger or in better health until we were 15 days on ship board. Moly Mew died which lay in the berth under mine and I took the favour of her and Biddy Conolly and also Catherine Relly. And Catherine tom own, neither of us was able to bring the other a drop of drink for nine days. And each of us was relapsed only as tug dan would bring it to us and Honour M'Gowan's children. I took the bowel complaint and continued with me for 3 weeks on the ship until we landed at the end of five weeks and one day ... we had to go to quarantine island to the hospital and I was given up by the doctor. I passed blood through me for three days and the skin and flesh busted off my teeth and gave blood on my mouth. I was attend by one Doctor Murphy from County Galway cured me in six days and also Betty ... After being five weeks on the island, I came out to saint John and was warmly received by Andrew Kerrigan who died of a fever and buried on the twenty-second of this month ... Roger, if in the case you intend to come out here, come early in the spring and let me know about it ... It is sorrowful to hear all of your neighbours that died here which was already dear to us ...

Patt and Catharine M'Gowan

Wexford Landlord Ignores Pleas

Wexford Guardian, December 1847 — Moran held a farm of about 20 acres in the parish of Adamstown. His landlord's name is Whitney. Moran's father and grandfather and great-grandfather, his ancestors for upwards of 200 years, tilled that farm and lived comfortably in it ...

The sum of £34 or thereabouts was due on the farm on July last. There was a good crop of corn on the ground, which the poor man and his distressed family laboured hard, through hunger and poverty, to sow.

The sheriff appeared on the lands in July last to give possession to the landlord. Moran had no lease, he offered to give corn to the full amount of rent and arrears; the corn was refused and money demanded, which Moran could not give them. He proposed to bring a part of his corn to the landlord's haggard and leave it there as a security — corn for his family. This offer was rejected and the law should take its course.

Moran was put out in July, but he lingered about the place and reaped some of the corn for food for his family. He was still expecting some settlement, and that he might be left in possession of his little farm. He continued about the premises until the first of September, when the sheriff appeared again. His house was thrown down, his corn reaped and carried away ... and the poor unfortunate man, his wife and six children and an aged father, 85 years old, driven on the world, without a roof to shelter them, without a day's food to sustain life, without one hope except from death, to release them from their miseries.

He constructed a sort of shed with some old boards and a winnowing sheet, but of that luxury we are informed, he was threatened to be deprived.

Ethnic center aided by \$5,000 grant

With a \$5,000 grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council, the Ethnic Heritage Center at Southern Connecticut State University, and the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society which is a partner in the center, have been able to lay the groundwork for development of archives and future programs.

The grant enabled the center to hire Dr. John Sutherland, history professor emeritus at Manchester Community College and a researcher of ethnic history, to assess, evaluate and make recommendations for the use of the collections of historical societies that form the heritage center.

Sutherland recommended that our historical society collect more documents, photos, yearbooks, organizational records, letters, diaries, family histories, etc. As part of his work, Sutherland on Nov. 16 presented a lecture and workshop on how to record family history.

In addition to funding Sutherland's work, the grant made possible the hiring of Judith Schiff, chief archivist at Yale's Sterling Library, to examine the collections of member societies of the Ethnic Heritage Center from the standpoint of an archivist and to make recommendations for the storage of archival materials.

The center is in the process of cataloguing and organizing its collections and volunteers are needed to help with the sorting and filing. Volunteers are also needed to help with the library, exhibits and displays, clerical duties and some receptionist duties. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact ethnic center director Jeanne Roche Whalen, 392-6126.

The grant also helped the heritage center to conduct an open house on Sept. 28, introducing the public as well as members to the new headquarters at Southern Connecticut State University.

Family History

Old city directories are full of genealogical material, such as the names of entire families together with street addresses and occupations. Our genealogist Paul R. Keroack has undertaken a project to rescue some of this material for Connecticut Irish people seeking their ancestors. Paul has begun the daunting task of extracting and listing Irish names from the Norwich city directory of 1867. Compiling the list is a difficult and inexact science because many names, such as Brown, Smith, Carey, etc., may be Irish or English in origin. Other names have numerous spelling variations, some of which appear not to be Irish. In his work, Paul is using Irish surname reference works and his knowledge of the Irish in Norwich from previous projects to sort out the Irish names. He intends to begin copying some names from Bridgeport and New Haven directories and we will, from time to time, print listings of the names he extracts. Anyone who wishes to help out in this project, either with those three cities, or other Connecticut towns, should get in touch with Paul through The Shanachie. The names below are from the Norwich directory of 1867.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Barnett, Daniel, laborer, Roath Rd.
John, laborer, White G. | Brennan, Mary, domestic, 23 Broadway
Michael, laborer, 11 Summit |
| Barry, Daniel, laborer, 119 Yantic
David, laborer, .3 G rd
Edmund, paper-maker, 6 n Main G
Ellen, weaver, High G
Mrs. Ellen, G rd
James, laborer, G rd
John, laborer, G rd
Mary, domestic, 6 Broadway
Michael, laborer, White G
Mrs. Nelly, wid Patrick, High G | Bresnahan, Cornelius, laborer, Roath rd
David, blacksmith, Roath rd
Michael, baggage master, 12 Boswell
Mrs. Margaret, 4th ab Prospect G
Brickley, John, currier, NT
Brown, Daniel J., machinist, Elizabeth
Joseph, laborer, 56 Thames
Mary, fac op, ab G n PT
Patrick, laborer, G rd
Patrick, currier, NT
William, papermaker, Main c 4th |
| Begley, John, laborer, 6th ab Prospect G
Berkery, James, laborer, G rd
Berkley, Michael, saloon, 271 Main, h do
Bernard, Mary, domestic, Main n 10th G
Birkery, James, laborer, NT
Thomas, farmer, BH | Buckley, Grace, domestic, 41 Broadway
John, laborer, Tafts
Mary, weaver, bds High G
Mary, domestic, 6 Broadway
Michael, laborer, bds 52 Yantic
Patrick, spinner, NT
Thomas, laborer, bds Main n 6th G |
| Birracree, Michael, gardener, 14 Cedar
Bowler, Ellen, fac. op., bds 119 Yantic
Mich'l, laborer, 6th ab Prospect G | Burke, A.J., speculator, Asylum n Falls
Chas., overseer, bds Lafayette
wid Ellen, Mt. Pleasant
Frank, horseshoer, 240 Main, h 105
Thames
wid Horace, 3 Lafayette
Margaret, domestic, 52 Washington
Mrs. Michael, 74 Union
Patrick, coachman, 62 Washington
Robert W., carpenter, bds 90 Wash.
Thomas, grocer, 20 Water, h do
Thomas, laborer, 255 Main
Thomas, laborer, Thamesville
Wm., saloon, 29 Franklin |
| Boyle, Edmund, laborer, 43 Union
John, laborer, Aqueduct
Thomas, teamster, 9 Summit | |
| Brady, Catharine, wid, Roath rd
James, lacemaker, Main LH
James, hosteler, bds 22 Sachem
Patrick, machinist, 15 Sachem
Terence, laborer, Harvy av | |
| Branin, Cornelius, fac op, Main n 9th G
Patrick, laborer, NT
Patrick, paper-maker, Main st n
9th G. | |
| Brannin, Bridget, fac op, bds 109 Yantic
Hannah, domestic, 19 Union
Humphrey, laborer, High n 6th G
James, farmer, 25 Yantic
Michael, laborer, High c 10th G | |
| Brassil, Michael, coachman, 69 Broadway | |
| Bray, Joseph, 23 3d G
Mary, domestic, 72 Washington
Pat, blacksmith, 6th ab Prospect G | |
| Brazill, James, laborer, 16 Cedar | |
| Brennan, Mrs. Cath., weaver, 49 Yantic
Daniel, laborer, G rd
James, laborer, bet Sr and CT | |

Abbreviations: Ab, above; al, alley; bel, below; b or bet, between; c, corner; bds, boards; do, ditto; G, Greenville; h, house; ft, foot; la, lane; opp, opposite; n, near; r, rear; sq, square; st, street; W, west; E, east; N, north; S, south; NLT New London Turnpike; NT Norwich Town; WS, west side; P, Preston; PH, Plain Hill; CT, Canterbury Turnpike; LH, Laurel Hill; O, Old; BH, Bean Hill; SR, Scotland Road; PT Providence Turnpike.

Briefly noted

FESTIVAL OF TREES — Our society is participating in the Wadsworth Atheneum's Annual Festival of Trees with the contribution of a St. Stephen's Day tree depicting the Irish custom of the Wren Boys who carry an effigy of a wren through the streets on St. Stephen's Day, Dec. 26, chanting a rhyme and collecting money to "bury the wren." The idea for the tree was conceived by Maureen Delahunt. Thanks to Maureen and her assistants, Pat Heslin, Mimi Perrotti, Jim and Essie Condon, Cathy Nicefaro, John Condon and Teresa Bramble for their efforts and for introducing our society and an Irish custom to a new audience.

MEMORIAL — A memorial has been received in memory of Edward Brassil and dedicated to his great interest in things Irish and his work to promote Irish history and culture. It was donated by Francis and Jeanne Roche Whalen on the occasion of Eddie's untimely passing.

EARLY IRISH LITERATURE AND MYTHOLOGY — A class on this topic is being offered in the spring semester at Gateway Community College in New Haven by arrangement with the CIAHS. The class includes four two-hour classes and is a non-credit, continuing education course. The fee is \$40. For information and to register, call Gateway Community College, 789-7071.

YALE GOES GREEN — An exhibit titled "Irish Paintings from the Collection of Brian P. Burns" is being featured at the Yale Center for British Art, 1080 Chapel St., New Haven, from Sept. 25 through Jan. 4, 1998. The 70 paintings in the exhibit cover a period from 1840 to the early years of the 20th century. The center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For information, call (203) 432-2800.

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society P.O. Box 120-020 East Haven, Connecticut 06512

"We have kept faith with the past; we have handed a tradition to the future."
Padraic Pearse

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Membership: \$10 individual; \$15 family. Send name, address and check made out to CIAHS at above address.

The Shanachie: In Ireland, a shanachie is a folklorist, historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.

Viking clues sought in East Lyme

Connecticut ethnic history became a major news story this past September when it was revealed that researchers from Denmark were visiting East Lyme in search of traces of 11th century Vikings.

The researchers, Jorgen D. Siemonsen and Johannes Hertz, are members of the Committee for Research on Norse Activities in North America AD 1000-1500. Their trip to Connecticut was sparked by coming across accounts of a metal spoon that was unearthed near the Shaw Manson in New London about 140 years ago.

According to one account, the spoon, decorated with Norse-style engravings, was sent to Copenhagen for study. Its whereabouts now are unknown.

The Danes said that an area around the Niantic River closely matches the characteristics of the Vinland described in ancient Norse sagas. The sagas say that Norsemen built a settlement at Vinland on a tidal raiver with a sandbar at its mouth and near a source of fresh water. The ancient manuscripts describe a land with a mild enough climate that cattle could be pastured all year and a land where grapes grew in abundance. The sagas also speak of a strong current flowing between islands which might fit the area of Block Island and Fishers Island on Long Island Sound.

The Danish researchers were especially interested in the Smith's Cove area of East Lyme.

Connecticut state archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni was quoted as welcoming the Viking quest even though no concrete evidence has ever come to light to connect the Vinland saga with Connecticut.

(Source: Meriden Record-Journal, Sept. 21, 1997.)

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our historical society and the other societies in the Ethnic Heritage Center and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we print in each issue of The Shanachie one story about another ethnic group.